



The Dr. Samuel D. Harris  
**NATIONAL  
MUSEUM of  
DENTISTRY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **National Museum of Dentistry launches oral health resource for parents of autistic children**

**BALTIMORE, MD** (September 16, 2011)—The National Museum of Dentistry has created a new resource to help parents of children with autism spectrum disorder succeed in teaching good oral healthcare. **Healthy Smiles for Autism** is a guide that helps parents teach children with autism spectrum disorder how to brush and floss with the help of step-by-step instruction, social stories, and visual sequencing cards that can be used wherever brushing happens. This guide is free and downloadable at [www.healthysmilesforautism.org](http://www.healthysmilesforautism.org).

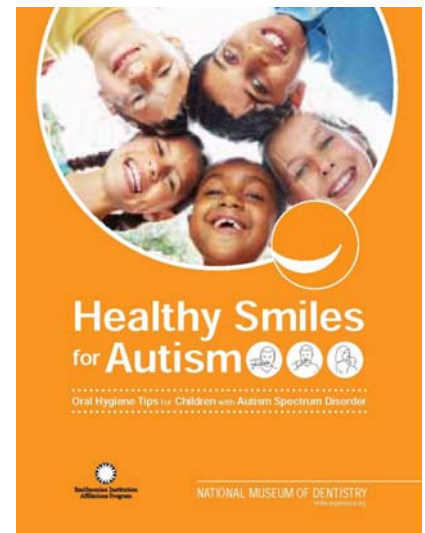
The **Healthy Smiles for Autism** guide was created to empower parents of children with autism spectrum disorder with usable tools to help effectively teach their children an oral health routine. The guide also provides information to help parents prepare their children for a first dental visit.

“We want to be able to give parents readily usable tools to help their children to develop a good oral hygiene regimen,” said National Museum of Dentistry Executive Director Jonathan Landers. “We’ve combined best practices for autism education, such as visual sequencing cards and rewards systems, with proven personal oral hygiene techniques to help make the process a little bit easier.”

The National Museum of Dentistry partnered with Kennedy Krieger Institute’s Center for Autism and Related Disorders and University of Maryland Dental School to develop these best practices to oral health care for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person’s ability to communicate and interact with others – including the dentist. Dental care is the leading unmet healthcare need among children with special needs, and across all income levels, children with special needs are almost twice as likely to have an unmet oral health care need than their peers without special needs, according to the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center.

**-more-**



The National Museum of Dentistry, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, develops unique learning opportunities to engage the public in discovering how to have a healthy mouth for life. Also available free to the public is the **MouthPower.org** website that teaches good oral health skills to children, and the **GetMouthPower.org** that reveals the special oral health care needs of adults 50+.

The Healthy Smiles for Autism guide is made possible by the support of Henry Schein Cares, the Global Corporate Social Responsibility program of Henry Schein, Inc., Blakeslee Advertising, and a generous gift from Dr. Irwin and Lucia Smigel.

### **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF DENTISTRY**

See amazing teeth feats, marvel at George Washington's choppers, sing along to vintage toothpaste commercials, and discover fascinating hands-on exhibitions about the power of a healthy smile. Enjoy field trips, home school days, special events, and more. An Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, this one-of-a-kind museum is located at 31 South Greene Street, a short walk from the Inner Harbor. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and students with ID, \$3 for children age 3-19; and free for age 2 & under and active duty military & immediate family. Open Wednesday–Saturday 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Sunday 1–4 p.m. Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, and major holidays. Call 410/706-0600 or visit [www.smile-experience.org](http://www.smile-experience.org).

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