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Milestones Met. Healthy Teeth Set.

*Guiding families to the right
specialist at the right time*



15

Oral and maxillofacial surgeons have a powerful, new platform to help champion children's oral health.

AAOMS – in collaboration with national dental specialties– has launched the Milestones Campaign, a national children's public oral health initiative urging timely visits to dental specialists at critical growth milestones. Together, each association is working to deliver a bold and unified directive to families, pediatricians, family physicians and educators alike: Visit the *right* dental specialist at the *right* time.

The campaign's message – Milestones Met: Healthy Teeth Set: Visit Specialists at Ages 1, 7, 15 – centers on urging families to seek specialist care at key growth milestones. Each milestone age corresponds to a meaningful window of opportunity in a child's oral health development. These key moments enable OMSs, dentists and orthodontists to work in alignment toward the prevention, early detection and timely treatment of dental issues before they become more complex.

What are the Milestones?

The campaign urges families to seek specialist care at three ages:

- 1** **Age 1** – See a dentist to establish early oral health habits.
- 7** **Age 7** – Have an orthodontist assess alignment and occlusion.
- 15** **Age 15** – Visit an OMS for third molar evaluation and management.

While these touchpoints reflect the natural stages of childhood development, the campaign's real impact lies in its ability to mobilize and empower. OMSs can play an integral role in educating families, advocating early intervention and positioning specialist care as an essential, proactive part of every child's oral health wellness journey.

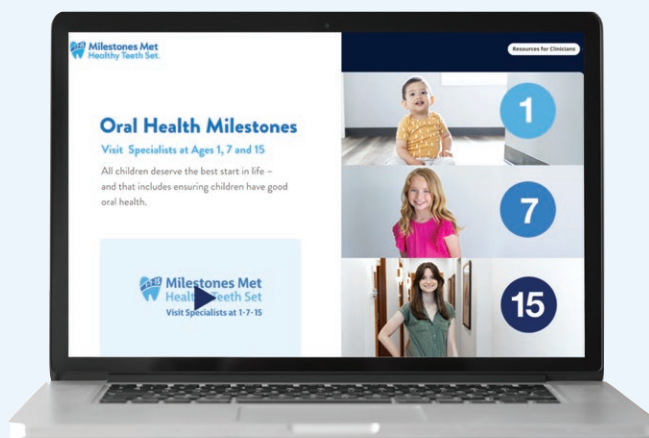
"We are positioned to influence how our communities prioritize oral health," said AAOMS President J. David Morrison, DMD. "The Milestones Campaign showcases the collective strength of national dental associations, empowering and equipping families and healthcare providers with the knowledge to take informed steps at the right time to support oral health."

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*– AAOMS President
J. David Morrison, DMD*

That unified strength, Dr. Morrison noted, is what gives the campaign its power – not only in message, but in its potential to create real change. It's a sentiment echoed by Jasjit K. Dillon, DDS, MBBS, FDSRCS, FACS, Chair of the AAOMS Committee on Public and Professional Communications, who sees the initiative as a critical turning point in how dental and medical communities work together.

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A new public service announcement for the Milestones Campaign aligns vital children's oral healthcare visits with familiar life milestones.



This campaign helps improve the health literacy of a community while helping OMSs stand out as the experts in removing wisdom teeth in a landscape replete with online, TV and radio advertising.

– Dr. Normund K. Auzins

“As the campaign evolves,” Dr. Dillon said, “we envision dentistry and medicine working in tandem to elevate children’s oral health on a broader scale.”

For Dr. Dillon, the message is deeply personal and forward-looking. “For parents, a child is their greatest investment – their future, their legacy,” she added. “This campaign is about prevention, empowerment and building a healthier tomorrow for the next generation. My hope is that this campaign will inspire lasting change and significantly improve the oral health of our young population.”

Reinforcing OMS expertise

The Milestones Campaign invites AAOMS members to champion a public health education role. Whether through school visits, community outreach or media interviews, OMSs can serve as informed advocates who explain why early specialist care matters – and how it fits into overall health and well-being.

“While OMSs typically become involved during adolescence, this campaign recognizes our specialty as a vital part of the care continuum,” said CPPC member Ehlie K. Bruno, DDS.

The campaign also reinforces the AAOMS Informational Campaign’s efforts to help clarify the distinction between general dental providers and OMSs in patients’ minds. It helps patients understand why specialist care matters, especially in a competitive landscape saturated with advertising from non-specialists.

This initiative resonates with CPPC member Normund K. Auzins, DDS. “Having worked with state dental boards and legislatures, I’ve experienced the challenges we face from non-specialists pushing to expand how they advertise

and present themselves to the public. This campaign helps improve the health literacy of a community while helping OMSs stand out as the experts in removing wisdom teeth in a landscape replete with online, TV and radio advertising.”

Step up as a Milestones Ambassador

AAOMS is seeking members who are ready to lead and serve as Milestones Ambassadors – trusted champions who raise awareness, inform patients and build relationships across their communities and professional networks.

“The complications with delaying care increase with the passage of time,” said Billy B. Laun II, DDS, of Carbondale, Ill., one of the campaign’s first Ambassadors. “I believe it is great to educate and encourage families to seek earlier care to avoid less desirable experiences in life.”

“Usually, delaying care costs more to the patient than prevention or earlier management,” Dr. Laun said.

Ambassadors are encouraged to:

- Share campaign materials with patients and colleagues.
- Promote the campaign on social media.
- Add backlinks to MilestonesMet.org from their practice websites.
- Encourage colleagues to get involved.

Ambassadors will be acknowledged with a special badge ribbon at AAOMS meetings, in *AAOMS Today* and highlighted in President e-newsletters, showcasing their commitment to advancing early oral health education. Participation can range from simple activities, such as displaying posters or posting on social media, to

more involved engagements such as presentations or collaborative outreach with local physicians.

Dr. Bruno emphasized that involvement in the Ambassador Program not only boosts the visibility of the campaign but also elevates the OMS specialty within local communities. "The Milestones Campaign reinforces the value of treatment provided by dental specialists, allowing us to provide the highest standard of care for our young patients," she said.

Together, these milestones and messages propel the campaign's goal: to guide families in prioritizing early specialist care to help ensure a lifetime of good oral health.

"To truly move the needle, we need our members to lead," Dr. Morrison said. "By promoting the campaign and stepping up as Ambassadors, OMSs can amplify our message, strengthen referral networks and help families build healthy habits that last a lifetime."

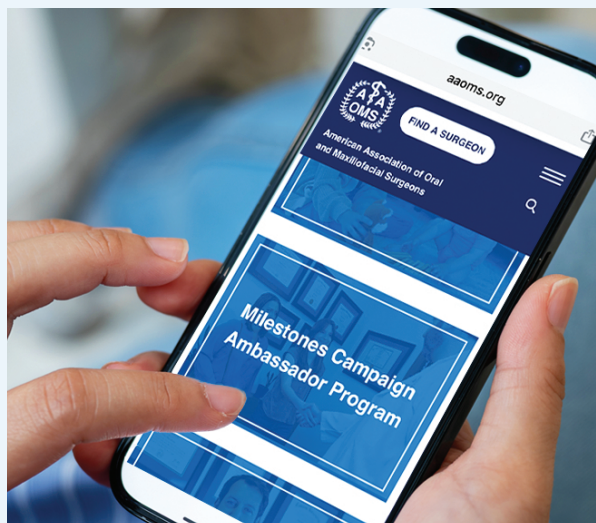
Unlock complimentary, shareable tools

To make participation effective, AAOMS has created a Milestones Campaign Toolkit with complimentary, downloadable resources. These materials can help members share the campaign message consistently across multiple touchpoints – whether in-person, online or in collaboration with medical colleagues.

"Our goal is simple," Dr. Morrison said. "We want to give members the tools to make a real difference in their practices, in their communities and in the lives of the families we serve."

Available for immediate download, current resources include:

- **Campaign logo** for websites and printed materials.
- **Postcards** that can be printed and mailed to patient lists or referring partners.
- **Social media graphics and sample posts** to educate your followers on Instagram, X and Facebook.
- **Customizable ads** featuring a provider headshot and practice contact information.
- **10-minute educational podcast** about the campaign that can be shared on social media.
- **Public service announcements (PSAs)** available in both audio (MP3) and video (MP4) to play in waiting



Sign up to be a Milestones Ambassador

Join other AAOMS members to become a Milestones Ambassador. Sign up at AAOMS.org/Milestones.



areas and use on practice websites. The audio version also can be used as an advertisement on a podcast or as part of a practice's hold music.

- **Infographics** that explain the campaign as well as provide education on wisdom teeth management (Spanish version coming soon).
- **Sample email** to educate current and prospective patients on the value of specialist care for wisdom teeth.

Additional resources will be created and released in the coming months, including:

- **A PowerPoint presentation** for school visits or health fairs.
- **Posters and fliers** that can be hung in OMS practices to raise awareness about the importance of specialist visits at key ages.
- **Media interview talking points** for the local press.
- **Sample outreach email** to local pediatricians or family physicians.

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These resources can be used together or individually, depending on each practice's communication and marketing strategy.

Take the outreach further

OMSs don't need a massive platform or social media following to make an impact. Small things – like playing the PSA video in waiting rooms or handing out educational brochures – can spark conversations in the exam room.

Beyond the office walls, there are even more outreach opportunities. Suggested activities include:

- **Host a community education night:** Organize a panel or presentation with pediatric dentists and orthodontists to educate caregivers.
- **Share information with local media:** Send a press release or article to local news outlets, offer to serve as an expert for an interview on oral health milestones and share the PSA.
- **Partner with local schools:** Deliver classroom presentations using the public-facing PowerPoint presentation. Provide educational materials to teachers and school nurses and distribute posters for display in classrooms, hallways and health offices.
- **Collaborate with public health departments:** Participate in health fairs by offering free dental screenings or oral cancer screenings. Distribute Milestones Campaign-branded giveaways and educational fliers.
- **Engage policymakers:** Connect with local and state officials to advocate for policies that improve access to children's dental care and emphasize early oral health interventions.
- **Promote a student essay contest:** Organize an oral health essay contest with topics related to dental milestones and oral health awareness. Offer prizes, recognition or scholarships to winners, and promote the contest through local and social media as well as on the practice website.




- **Present at professional gatherings:**


Use the Milestones Campaign PowerPoint at study clubs, dental society meetings or interprofessional events to inform healthcare providers about dental health milestones and foster cross-disciplinary collaboration.

These efforts can strengthen referral networks, enhance community trust and reinforce your OMS practice as a leader in early oral health education.

"Every interaction is a chance to educate," Dr. Morrison said. "Whether it's a poster on the wall or a conversation in the chair, we're building awareness and trust that lasts." ■

**Milestones Met
Healthy Teeth Set**
Visit Specialists at Ages 1-7-15.



**Milestones Met
Healthy Teeth Set**

**Milestones Met™
Healthy Teeth Set**

Visit Specialists at Ages 1-7-15™

Your child's oral health matters



See a dental specialist at these key ages

1 Dentist 7 Orthodontist 15 Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon

Milestones Met Healthy Teeth Set Learn more at MilestonesMet.org

**Your child's
oral health
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Send them to the
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at the **right** time

Send your child to a dental specialist at these key ages

1 7 15



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Healthy Teeth Set**
Visit Specialists at Ages 1-7-15.

Learn more at MilestonesMet.org

Learn when to see the right
oral health specialist

1 7 15 years



Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon

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