

# Baby Teeth Matter!



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# Tips to Keep Your Child's Teeth Healthy

Baby teeth are important for your child's healthy development, so it is important to take good care of them.



## Newborns to One Year

- Clean your baby's mouth even before teeth appear.
- Use a soft damp cloth to clean your baby's gums after each feeding.



## After Baby's First Tooth

- Use an infant-sized toothbrush.
- Use fluoride toothpaste (age 0-3, about the size of a grain of rice).
- Cavity-causing bacteria in your mouth can transfer easily to your baby's mouth, so avoid sharing utensils. Likewise, don't clean your baby's soother in your mouth. Healthy adult mouths transfer fewer cavity-causing bacteria to children, so keep up on your daily dental care.
- Bring your child to see a dentist within six months of their first tooth, or by age one.
- Visit your dentist regularly.



## Brushing & Toothpaste

- Brush twice a day, especially before bedtime, and **always** use fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride strengthens the tooth enamel and helps prevent tooth decay. Without fluoridation in our municipal water supply, there is an increased risk of tooth decay – making it very important to use fluoride toothpaste for children of all ages.
- Young children can't clean their own teeth. Brush **for** them when they are very young and **with** them as they grow older, recommended until age 8.



## Bedtime

- If you breastfeed or give your child a bottle at night, wipe or brush their teeth afterwards.
- If you choose to put your child to bed with a bottle, fill with water only. Milk, formula, and juice can cause serious tooth decay and infection when left in a sleeping baby's mouth. At 1 year of age, wean children from bottles.



## Eating & Drinking

- Limit healthy snacks to one to three times per day. Discourage children of all ages from snacking on sugary foods and drinks throughout the day or overnight. Constant, slow sipping on milk or juice filled bottles and/or sippy cups keeps sugars in the mouth and can lead to cavities. Fill them with water instead.



## Benefits of Starting Routine Dental Hygiene Early

- Help children establish proper oral hygiene habits into adulthood.
- Encourage healthy nutrient intake for growth.
- May have fewer cavities and sources of oral discomfort or pain.
- Healthy baby teeth help prevent loss of space for adult teeth.

If dental problems are found earlier, they are less painful and easier to fix. Check your child's mouth and visit your dentist regularly.

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