

Something to smile about..



Start now
to give
your child
a healthy
smile.



Start now to give your child a healthy smile...

- Did you know that baby teeth are important for your child's healthy smile?
- Baby teeth help your child chew food, talk clearly, and they save space for the permanent teeth.
- A healthy smile will make your child look and feel great.
- Good overall health depends on good dental health.
- You can give your child a healthy smile...
the time to start is now.



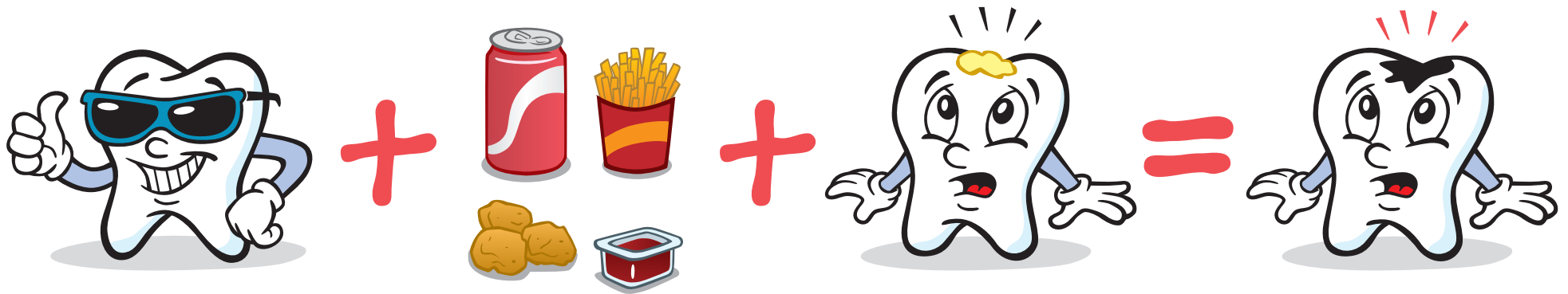
Early
childhood
caries is
serious!



Early Childhood Caries is serious...

- This is a picture of Early Childhood Caries in a young child. You may have heard it called Baby Bottle Tooth Decay.
- Early Childhood Caries is an infectious and transmissible disease. By simply kissing your baby, parents and caregivers can pass on the germs responsible for tooth decay to their children.
- If left untreated, decayed teeth can abscess, and infections from these teeth can lead to life-threatening health problems.
- The good news is: Early Childhood Caries can be prevented by following some simple steps.





Tooth + Food + Plaque = Tooth Decay

(causes acid) (cavities)



Tooth + Food + Plaque (causes acid) = Tooth Decay (Cavities)...

- For decay to happen, there must be a tooth, some food (or drink) and plaque.
- Plaque is a soft, sticky layer of germs that forms on teeth everyday. If you scratch an unclean tooth with your fingernail, you will remove a sticky film. That is plaque.
- When plaque is left on teeth your child can more easily get cavities. The germs in the plaque feed on sugars and create an acid. This acid is what starts tooth decay.
- All day exposure to high sugar foods and drinks (with natural and added sugars), including milk, juice, breast milk and baby formula, can cause tooth decay (cavities).



Cavities can get worse very fast.



White Spots



Mild



Moderate



Severe

See your dentist as soon as possible!



Cavities can get worse very fast...

- Early Childhood Caries usually starts on your child's front teeth. If a chalky white line appears along the gumline, the acid has begun to destroy the enamel (hard outer layer of the tooth).
- If left untreated, these spots can become cavities very fast, sometimes in as short as 30 days. If you see white spots/lines along the gumline of your child's teeth, you should see a dentist as soon as possible. In the meantime make sure your child is not eating or drinking lots of sugary things and brush your child's teeth regularly with fluoride toothpaste. At first just a smear of toothpaste is all you need. As your child gets older, a pea size of toothpaste is all that is needed! Be sure to have your child spit out toothpaste.
- Your dentist or dental hygienist may recommend your child receive a fluoride varnish application to help prevent, stop or reverse tooth decay.





Keep your own teeth
and gums clean.



Go to the dentist
before your baby
is born.



Clean baby's teeth
and gums every day.

Start now to prevent Early Childhood Caries!



Start now to prevent Early Childhood Caries...

- If you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, it is important for you to schedule a dental check up.
- Keep your mouth healthy and clean to prevent the spread of cavity causing germs. Parents or caregivers with active tooth decay or gum disease can pass those germs onto the baby almost immediately.
- Even though your baby may not have teeth for many months after birth, it is important for you to clean your baby's mouth everyday. Use a clean warm cloth to gently wipe the inside of your baby's mouth, especially after feedings and before bed.





When nursing or giving a bottle...

- Use only breast milk, formula, or water in the bottle.
- Hold your baby when feeding.



When nursing or giving a bottle...

- Be sure to give only breast milk, formula or water in the bottle.
- Never put juice, soda, or other sweet drinks in the baby bottle.
- Never put your baby to sleep with a bottle in its mouth, unless it's filled only with water.
- If you use a pacifier, do not dip it in anything sweet like sugar or honey.



As your baby grows...

- Start cup at about 6 months.
- Stop bottle by 1st birthday.
- Limit juice to meals and snacks.



As your baby grows...

- Start using a regular cup (not sippy or no spill cups) with breast milk or formula around 6 months of age.
- Wait until 12 months to give juice, and give it from a cup, never from a bottle.
- Limit juice to 4-6 ounces (1/2-3/4 cup) a day at planned meals or snack time. Do not let your child sip on juice all day long; this could put your child at risk for cavities.
- Unlike bottle feeding, breast feeding can go on as long as you and your baby want!





Snack time!
Give healthy snacks.



Give healthy snacks...

- Young children need 2-3 snacks per day, and not more.
- Plan healthy snacks that will meet part of your child's daily needs. For example:
 - Protein foods: meat, peanut butter, bean dip
 - Dairy foods: milk, yogurt, cheese
 - Fruits and vegetables

Note: Advise about appropriate foods and choking precautions according to child's age and development!!

- Everyone loves a sweet treat! But limit sweets in quantity and portion size to meal or snacktime.



Visit the dentist

- Plan first dental visit at about age 1.
- Go sooner if you see white spots.
- Go every 6 months after that.



Visit the dentist...

- Plan your child's first dental visit by age 1, sooner if you notice something you are concerned about (especially white spots along the gumline of the front teeth)
- Every family should have a dental home
- Your family dentist will determine when it is best for you to bring your child back for more dental check ups.

Do you need help finding a dentist? We can give you information to help you find a dentist you can afford.

(Note: This information is on a separate companion piece.)



- 1 Baby teeth are important.
- 2 Mom's teeth are important.
- 3 Clean teeth and gums every day.
- 4 Only breast milk, formula, or water in bottle.
- 5 No bottle or breast when sleeping.
- 6 Give juice in a cup only, starting at one year of age.
- 7 Trade bottle for cup by six months.
- 8 Give healthy snacks.
- 9 Baby's check-ups start at age 1.
- 10 See white spots?
See the dentist.



Remember...

- Baby teeth are important. They make a difference in how your child eats, talks, looks and feels.
- Your oral health is important. Make sure you have healthy teeth and gums before your baby is born.
- Early Childhood Caries can be prevented. Follow these simple rules:
 - Clean your baby's gums and teeth every day.
 - Give only breast milk, formula or water in a bottle.
 - Never let your baby sleep with a bottle.
 - Give juice only in a cup, starting at about 12 months.
 - Trade the bottle for a cup by six months.
 - Give your child healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables instead of sweets.
 - Start regular dental checkups for your baby by age 1.
 - Check for white spots—see the dentist right away if they are present.



Working Together to Improve the Oral Health of Wisconsin Children and Families



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