

Give your Baby a Healthy Head Start

The first step to ensuring your child's oral health is taking care of your own health.



- Go to the dentist on a regular basis.
- Dental care is safe during pregnancy.
- Brush your teeth thoroughly twice a day with fluoride toothpaste to remove plaque.
- Clean between teeth daily.

Healthy Primary Baby Teeth

- Clean your baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth after feeding and at bedtime to wipe away germs and sugar.
- Ask your dentist, dental hygienist or doctor about fluoride supplements to build strong teeth.
- Only breast milk, formula or water should be fed from a bottle.
- Offer the bottle only at feeding times.
- Do not put baby to sleep with a bottle or sippy cup.
- Once your baby has teeth, a soft toothbrush can be used to clean teeth.



Fluoride and Dental Sealants

Why is fluoride important?

Fluoride will help strengthen teeth and protect them from decay. Determine the fluoride level in your water and if it does not contain enough fluoride, ask your dentist or doctor about giving your child fluoride drops or tablets.

Topical fluoride applications, such as fluoride varnish, can be applied as soon as the first tooth erupts. Topical fluoride applications help prevent cavities. Speak to a dental hygienist, dentist, nurse or medical doctor for advice about fluoride applications.

What are dental sealants?

Dental sealants are a thin, plastic coating that will seal out food and germs that cause decay. Dental sealants will help prevent decay on the biting parts of back teeth. Ask your dentist or dental hygienist if your child needs sealants.



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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HEALTHY TEETH FOR HAPPY SMILES



Oral Health Tips for Parents and Caregivers

Baby and Toddler Oral Health

Early prevention is key to assuring a lifetime of good oral health.



Why are baby teeth important?

- Chew and speak clearly
- Guide permanent teeth
- Jaw and face formation
- Good health
- Smile and self image

Early Childhood Caries (ECC) Also Known as Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

- Early Childhood Caries is decay in the teeth of infants and children that can be painful.
- The sugar in formula, juice and sweetened drinks may decay the teeth if it stays in the baby's mouth during sleep. Avoid putting your baby to sleep with a bottle.
- Do not add sugar, syrups, sweeteners, soft drinks or honey to the bottle or pacifier.

Time for a Cup

- Babies should be weaned from a bottle by their first birthday.
- Take bottle away gradually. Most babies will not want to give up the bottle all at once.
- When your baby is able to sit well, begin offering a small cup (around 6 months). Healthy choices would include water, breast milk or formula.
- Be patient. It will take your baby time to learn to drink from a cup.

Building Blocks for a Healthy Mouth



Care for Teeth Begins Early in Life

1 - 2 Years

- Gently brush your child's teeth with a soft tooth brush after meals and at night.
- Schedule a dental visit by the first birthday.
- Healthy teeth are all one color. If you see any brown spots or stains on your child's teeth see a dental or medical professional right away.

2 - 6 Years

- Take your child to a dental professional for care.
- Brush your child's teeth with a small smear of fluoride toothpaste after meals and before bed.
- Supervise your child to ensure they are spitting out the toothpaste.

It is important to supervise and assist your child for every brushing until they are capable of correctly brushing their teeth.

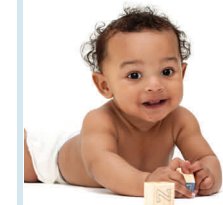
Good Nutrition and Teething

Age-appropriate nutritious foods and beverages are needed for healthy teeth and gums.



- Encourage good eating habits. Choose a variety of foods from each of the food groups. Set regular meals and snack times.
- Feed your child snacks low in sugar like cheese, yogurt, peanut butter and vegetables.
- When your child is thirsty, offer water. Avoid sweet drinks such as soda and juice.
- Brush teeth after eating with fluoride toothpaste.
- Limit the amount of sugary treats such as candy, fruit snacks, cookies and cake.
- Children ages 1-5 need three cups of milk per day.

Teething



When will my child get a tooth?

Typically between 6 to 10 months old.

What are symptoms of teething?

Symptoms are fussiness and drooling. Try a cool or wet cloth. Avoid teething biscuits. Teething does not cause fever or an ear infection. Your child may need extra love and attention during teething.