



PROTECT BABY TEETH

Baby teeth are important! Children need healthy gums and teeth to form words, hold a healthy space for adult teeth, and have a nice smile.

WHEN WILL MY BABY'S TEETH COME IN?

Baby teeth will start to come in at about 6 months of age. Taking care of your child's baby teeth is important! It helps establish good oral health habits for life.

TEETHING

- › Babies may have tender gums when teething.
- › Drooling, fussing, or a low appetite is common.
- › Soothe gums with a cold washcloth or teething ring.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thumb-sucking and pacifier use can cause problems with teeth. Talk to your dentist if your child is using a pacifier or sucking his thumb.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR CHILD'S MOUTH AND TEETH

- › Start a routine of wiping your baby's gums. Use a clean, moist washcloth to gently wipe the gums, reducing plaque that can harm new teeth.
- › When your child gets his first tooth, switch to a soft toothbrush. Use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste just the size of a grain of rice. Brush with small gentle circles over each tooth.
- › Brush teeth twice a day. Provide assistance until 3 years old and supervise your child's brushing until age 8.
- › A dentist should see a child when their first tooth comes in, and a visit is recommended by their first birthday.



CLEAN TEETH FOR A HAPPY, HEALTHY SMILE

Your child can get cavities as soon as his first tooth appears! If cavities are severe, baby teeth may need to be removed. Pain caused by cavities can make it difficult for your child to eat, get enough sleep, behave, pay attention, and learn to speak.

PREVENT TOOTH DECAY

- Wean your child off the bottle by 12 to 14 months of age.
- Plain water is best between meals and snacks. Drinking small sips of other beverages through the day can cause tooth decay.
- Clean your child's teeth before bed.
- Offer water to a toddler if thirsty during the night. Other liquids on your child's teeth at night can cause tooth decay.
- Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay. Ask your dentist if your child is getting enough fluoride.
- Use a clean pacifier with no sugar or honey on it.
- Do not pass tooth decay on to your child. Avoid using your utensils to feed him, putting his pacifier in your mouth, or prechewing his food.

Healthy Teeth



Early decay



Advanced decay



DO NOT

- ✗ Do not offer soda, juice, or soft drinks in a bottle.
- ✗ Do not put him to bed with a bottle or cup.
- ✗ Do not dip a pacifier in sugar or honey, or put it into your mouth before giving it to your child — this can transfer harmful bacteria.

