

Oral Health Tips

Cavities can be prevented by taking care of your infant's teeth. Your baby is not healthy unless their mouth is healthy.

At Home

Clean Teeth Twice Daily

- Start early! Beginning at birth, wipe your child's gums with a washcloth or piece of gauze after feeding.
- Brush your baby's teeth with a soft toothbrush twice a day, as soon as you see the first tooth (usually around 6 months).
 - Use a rice-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste.
 - Try placing your baby's head in your lap to make it easier to brush their teeth.

Choose Healthy Food and Drinks

- If you give your baby a bottle at bedtime or naps, fill it with water. Juice, formula, milk and breast milk can cause decay if left in your baby's mouth while the child is sleeping.
- When your child is ready, provide healthy snacks such as cheese, fruits and vegetables. Avoid juice, pop, candy and carbohydrate snacks such as crackers, pretzels. All of these can cause cavities.
- Limit how often your child has juice, sweet drinks and snacks. Constant snacking on sticky foods or sipping sweet liquids throughout the day can cause tooth decay.
- Offer water instead of juice or pop.

Lift the Lip and Look

- Babies change quickly. Every month lift your baby's lip and look for changes on your baby's teeth.
- Tooth decay often starts on the front or back of the front teeth and along the gums.
- If you notice white or brown spots on the teeth or anything unusual, contact your baby's dentist or physician.

Take care of your oral health

- If your mouth is healthy, your baby is more likely to have a healthy mouth too.
- The germs that cause cavities can be passed to children.
- Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste, floss and have regular check-ups.

During check-ups

First screen by first birthday by a dentist or physician

- Have your baby's mouth checked by age one. Take your baby in sooner if you notice a problem.
- During the checkup your dentist or physician should:
 - Look at your baby's teeth for signs of early tooth decay.
 - Talk about daily tooth care including brushing.
 - Discuss your baby's diet and eating habits.
- You should ask whether your child needs:
 - Fluoride varnish: it can be easily applied on your child's teeth and can prevent and reverse early dental decay.
 - Fluoride drops or tablets — if your water does not contain fluoride.