

RED FLAGS FOR CHILDREN

Nursing bottle syndrome

Also known as baby bottle tooth decay. Results when a baby constantly takes in milk, juice, formula, and other sugary liquids. Sleeping through the night with a bottle increases your baby's risk of developing cavities by continuously bathing the teeth in a sugary liquid.

Decayed/missing baby teeth

Baby teeth serve to hold the space for permanent teeth to erupt properly. Missing baby teeth can result in crooked or misaligned permanent teeth, overbites, and protrusion of teeth. This can affect speech and social development for your child.

Thumb sucking and pacifier use

Thumb sucking is a naturally calming activity for babies, but can have a negative effect on the placement of teeth, development of the pallet, and speech.

Typically, children will wean themselves from thumb sucking and pacifier use. Try to encourage weaning from these habits around the age of two to avoid any oral issues.

Fluoride Varnish and Xylitol Wipes

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral. When drinking optimally fluoridated water or applying a topical varnish, fluoride helps to protect the tooth from decay by hardening the enamel. Discuss your child's fluoride needs with your dentist.

Xylitol Wipes are infused with Xylitol and can be easily used on the go or for regular care of your babies newly erupted teeth. Xylitol is a naturally occurring sweetener that has the benefit of enamel mineralization and also interferes with bacterial growth and reproduction.



Oral Health Task Force North Shore Health Care Foundation

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ORAL HEALTH FROM BIRTH AND BEYOND



Baby's teeth usually begin to erupt around six months of age, but you can start to care for your baby's oral health as early as birth. Starting care early on helps to build a lifetime of good dental habits. Cavities begin when baby's teeth and oral cavity are exposed to the decay causing bacteria passed along from mother or caregiver. It is important to prevent the spread of these bacteria by refraining from sharing spoons, cups, and cleaning pacifiers off in your mouth.

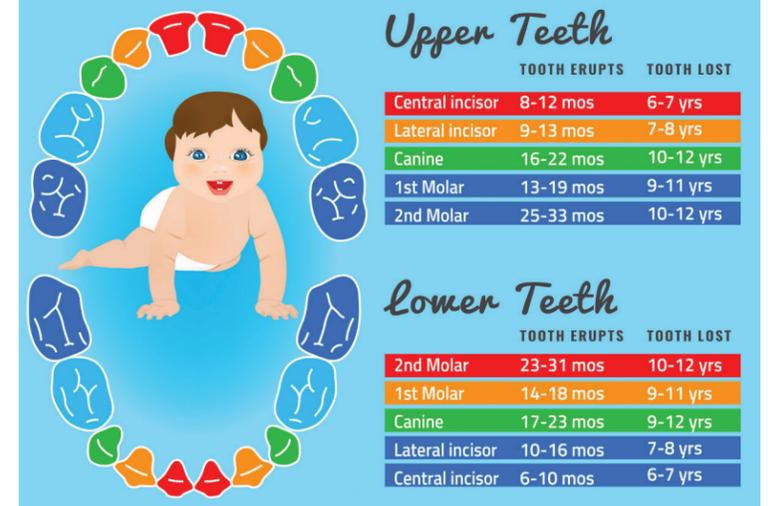
CARE FOR YOUR BABY FROM THE BEGINNING

Begin by gently cleaning your baby's gums after feedings with clean, soft baby washcloth.

When the first teeth begin to erupt (usually around 6 months), continue using a soft washcloth to clean the teeth after feedings.

Your baby's first dental visit should occur between the eruption of the first tooth and the child's first birthday.

Baby Teeth Arrival Chart



CARING FOR YOUR TEETHING BABY

Between birth and age three your child will develop 20 primary (baby) teeth.



CARING FOR YOUR TEETHING BABY
continued....

Start brushing your baby's teeth twice daily, even if it's only one tooth.

Babies gums are tender during this transition. Gently massage the gums or use a chilled teething ring to soothe.

Between 6 months and three years of age, use only a smear of toothpaste on a soft toothbrush

Do not allow your child to fall asleep with a bottle containing anything but water.

Do not dip the pacifier in sweet foods like sugar, honey, or syrup to soothe your baby.

Don't allow your baby to use a sippy cup with juice or sweetened drinks throughout the day, limit frequency of sweetened drinks.

Encourage drinking at mealtime, and encourage drinking water in between meals.

Establish a dental home for your child and begin regular dental visits every 6 months.

18 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS

Establish good eating habits early on.

Aim for healthy, low sugar snacks between meals.

Begin to encourage your child to brush independently for the first minute, follow up with helping your child to make certain they have reached all surfaces.

Children at this age will often focus on their front teeth when brushing.

Start by demonstrating a gentle back and forth motion, brushing the teeth on all surfaces.

Role model proper brushing, spend time brushing your teeth with your child.



3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS

Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on a soft toothbrush.

Supervise your child until they can independently and properly brush for 2 minutes.

Remind your child to spit and not swallow the toothpaste.

Have your child brush twice daily, begin flossing your child's teeth.

Introduce a home fluoride rinse once your child is able to properly spit without swallowing.

HOW DECAY STARTS

Babies are not born with the decay causing bacteria that adults have acquired.

Bacteria is often passed on from mother or caregiver.

Avoid sharing spoons, cups, and cleaning off your baby's pacifier by putting it in your mouth.

Decay causing bacteria feed off sugars and carbohydrates, producing acid that causes the enamel to break down.

Infants should only have breast milk, formula, or water in their bottle. Avoid juices, soda, and sweetened drinks.

Avoid putting your baby down for nap or bedtime with a bottle.

Each family member should have their own toothbrush.

THEY ARE JUST BABY TEETH?

Primary teeth help your child to chew, speak, smile, and develop socially. Primary teeth hold the space for permanent teeth to erupt when your child is about 6 years of age. Maintaining healthy primary teeth leads the way for healthy permanent teeth.

LIFTING THE LIP

Parents can start to look for early signs of decay and other potential problems:

Changes in tooth color
(white or brown spots)

Holes on the tooth surface

Broken or chipped teeth

Swollen or bleeding gums

Any changes in your child's mouth should be reported to the dentist. This at home evaluation should not replace routine visits to the dentist.

YOUR CHILDS FIRST DENTAL VISIT

Your child should see the dentist around their first birthday.

Prepare your child for the visit by talking about what will happen at the appointment.

Role-play with your child, read books that talk about going to the dentist, present going to the dentist in a positive way.

Avoid saying "it won't hurt" or "don't be scared."

Consider a "happy visit" to the dentist to watch older siblings, see the dental office, and take a ride in a dental chair.

