

Healthy Teeth for Your Child

NEWBORN - 6 MONTHS

- Cavities (tooth decay) are caused by bacteria on the teeth, and it is easy to prevent them in your child.
- Wipe your baby's teeth and gums with a wet washcloth, burping bib, or gauze after breakfast and at bedtime.
- The best way to clean the mouth is to sit on a couch or bed and lay your baby's head in your lap.
- **Never put your baby down to sleep with anything in the bottle but water.** Juice and milk (even breast milk) have natural sugars that can cause cavities.
- By age 1 take your child to a dentist to start regular visits.

6 MONTHS - 3 YEARS

- Brush your child's teeth and gums with a soft toothbrush and a smear of fluoride toothpaste in the morning and before bed.
- Choose a child-size toothbrush with a long handle since you will be brushing for your child.
- Switch from a bottle to a cup by age one. Sippy cups should only be used until your child can properly hold a cup.
- Limit snacking. **The more often your child snacks, the more likely they will get cavities.**
- Limit the amount of juice to a ½ cup per day (that is just 1 juice box!). Give your child water between meals.
- Make regular visits to your dentist.

3 YEARS - 6 YEARS

- Brush your child's teeth and gums with a soft toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste for 2 minutes, once after breakfast and once before bed.
- Children shouldn't brush completely on their own until they can tie their shoelaces. That's usually around 7 years old.
- Limit the number of times your child snacks during the day. Avoid sugary drinks like fruit juice, sweetened iced tea and soda. Remember, juice should be limited to ½ cup per day.
- Give your child tooth-healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, and yogurt and cheese.
- Make regular visits to your dentist.

DO:

Do brush your child's teeth in your lap.



Do use fluoride toothpaste.



Smear
6 months - 3 years



Pea-size
3+ years

Do help your child keep his/her teeth healthy.



DON'T:

Don't put your child down with anything other than water.



Don't let your child brush alone until age 7.



Don't let your child get painful cavities.



How to Brush Your Child's Teeth

Remember:
Brush for 2 minutes
after breakfast
and again
at bedtime.

STEP 1



Use fluoride toothpaste: a smear for under 3 years old and a pea-size for over 3 years old. Start on the outside of the top front teeth. Scrub while aiming for where the teeth meet the gums.

STEP 2



Work your way along the gums to the back teeth, gently moving the cheek out of the way. Repeat on the other side.

STEP 3



Have your child open wide so you can scrub the grooves of the back teeth where they chew. Then brush the inside of the back teeth.

STEP 4



Finish the top by scrubbing behind the front teeth. You should spend 1 whole minute brushing the top teeth.

STEP 5



Move to the bottom teeth and start by brushing the outside of the front teeth.

STEP 6



Work your way along the gums to the back teeth, gently moving the cheek out of the way. Repeat on the other side.

STEP 7



Have your child open wide so you can scrub the grooves of the back teeth where they chew. Then brush the inside of the back teeth.

STEP 8



Finish the bottom by scrubbing behind the front teeth. You should spend 1 whole minute brushing the bottom teeth.

STEP 9



Have your child spit out the extra toothpaste, but **do not rinse with water!**