

Care Of The Teeth Should Begin Early In Life

Birth - 1 year old Wipe your infant's gums twice a day with a clean cloth in the morning and right before bedtime. Talk to your dentist or doctor about first dental visit.

1 year old When your child's teeth come in, start brushing twice a day with a soft, small toothbrush and plain water.

1 - 2 years old Gently brush your child's teeth daily with a soft toothbrush. Use a smear of toothpaste with fluoride. At your child's first dental visit, discuss fluoride varnish for your child's teeth.

2 - 3 years old Brush your child's teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste for two minutes. Floss between your child's teeth daily. Your child should visit the dentist regularly.

Over 6 years old Supervise tooth brushing and flossing until your child understands the length of time needed to effectively brush their teeth. Sweets or sticky foods should only be eaten with or after meals. Keep in mind that starchy foods, like crackers or potato chips, also cause tooth decay. Children should eat a variety of foods from the five major food groups. Take your child to the dentist regularly.

Be sure to brush your teeth correctly.

Dentists recommend the following:

- Place the toothbrush at a 45 degree angle against the gums.
- Move the brush back and forth gently in tooth-wide strokes.
- Brush the outer tooth surfaces, the inner tooth surfaces and the top of the teeth.
- Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and freshen your breath.

Give your child a healthy smile

Prevent Childhood Tooth Decay



www.scdhec.gov/wic

Medicaid eligible children receive free medical and dental services.

To find out if you qualify for Medicaid, contact your county

Department of Social Services (DSS) office.

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Your Child's Mouth Does NOT Have To Look Like This!

What Is Early Childhood Tooth Decay?

Tooth decay is a disease that damages and breaks down teeth. The more layers of the teeth affected by decay, the worse the damage.

Is Early Childhood Tooth Decay Serious?

Yes! It can cause:

- painful toothaches and long hours of crying
- loss of baby teeth
- damage to permanent teeth
- failure to thrive
- poor eating habits
- speech problems
- ear infections

Your Child's Mouth Needs To Look Like This!



Causes Of Early Childhood Tooth Decay

- Putting a child to bed with a bottle or sippy cup of formula, milk, juice or sweet drink at bedtime or naptime
- Using a bottle of formula, milk, juice or sweet drink as a pacifier
- Giving a child a pacifier that has been dipped in sugar, syrup, jelly or honey
- Not cleaning your child's teeth and/or gums each day
- Sharing a drink, cup, straw, or utensils with older child or adult
- Having a child use a bottle too long

How To Prevent Early Childhood Tooth Decay

- Don't put your child to sleep with a bottle or sippy cup.
- Check with your doctor to make sure your child is getting the right amount of fluoride.
- Begin to use a cup when your child is 6 or 7 months old. This will make weaning much easier.
- Wean your child from the bottle by 1 year of age.
- Care for your child's teeth and gums daily.

Remember:

Your child needs love and care to keep a healthy smile. A healthy smile makes a happier child.

