

## Begin caring for your child's teeth & gums with the first tooth.<sup>1</sup>

*Children can suffer when their oral health is not protected. Missed school days or having less energy for activities are just some examples of what can happen. Read the below to learn more about the unique oral health challenges kids can face.*

### Baby Bottle Syndrome

Baby Bottle Syndrome is now the **number one cause** of extensive tooth decay in children under three years of age – and it is preventable. Sleeping with a baby bottle full of any sweet liquid (juice, milk, soda) is usually the culprit. Don't give your child food at bedtime. If your child needs a bottle at bedtime for comfort, fill it with water or use a pacifier instead.

### Too much fluoride can damage a young child's teeth

If too much fluoridated toothpaste is swallowed, it may lead to small, white flecks on the teeth, called **fluorosis** or mottling. Children between the ages of two and six swallow about 33% of the toothpaste on the brush and those between 7 and 16 swallow 20% according to Dr. Tom McGuire, author of *Tooth Fitness*. Start your child off right with the brush alone, until he or she won't swallow the toothpaste.

### Begin scheduling regular dental visits for your child at an early age

To detect and prevent cavities and other oral health problems, your child should see a dentist as soon as his or her baby teeth appear. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends children see a dentist when the first baby tooth emerges, usually **between the ages of six months and one year**. This first visit is critical so parents can learn appropriate steps to assist in maintaining their child's oral health.



### Tooth Decay is #1 chronic childhood disease

Despite tremendous declines in childhood cavities, tooth decay remains the **single most common chronic disease of childhood**. Healthy People 2000 oral health update shows that 52% of 6-8 year olds have tooth decay — making it five to eight times more common than asthma, (typically cited as the most common chronic condition of childhood). The good news is that, fewer children are experiencing tooth decay overall!

### Children need a simpler brushing technique

Children should use a different brushing technique than adults. Children, especially those under the age of four, will benefit most from a simple brushing technique designed for smaller hands and mouths. The **scrub technique** is recommended, whereby all surfaces are scrubbed in small circular motions with the bristles of the toothbrush.

**You can help your child achieve a lifetime of strong healthy teeth and winning smiles!**



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