

BRIGHT AND HEALTHY SMILES BEGIN AT BIRTH



bright smiles
FROM BIRTH

BABY TEETH ARE IMPORTANT!

Healthy teeth help baby learn to talk, eat healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, and make friends by smiling and laughing. They also save space for bigger, adult teeth.

YOUR TEETH ARE IMPORTANT TO THE HEALTH OF YOUR BABY

Your baby will do what you do! Model good habits by brushing and flossing your teeth twice per day and visiting the dentist regularly. Germs in your mouth that cause decay can be passed from you to your child and give them tooth decay. If you take care of your teeth, your baby will have healthy teeth.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START TAKING CARE OF BABY'S TEETH

Before your baby has teeth, wipe their gums gently with a clean wet cloth after feedings and before your baby goes to sleep. When their teeth come in, brush them with a soft toothbrush and a smear of fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice. When the child is able to spit, change to a pea size amount of toothpaste. Children's teeth need to be brushed by an adult until they can tie their shoes on their own (around 6 years old).

HEALTHY DIET = HEALTHY TEETH

Do not put your child to sleep with milk or juice in the bottle – only water. Limit juice to snack and meal times only and give no more than one half cup of juice a day. Soda, sweet drinks, candy and sticky foods can cause teeth to decay faster. Cheese, yogurt, fruits and vegetables will help your child and their teeth be healthy.

AVOID PASSING THE GERMS THAT CAUSE TOOTH DECAY

Cavities are a type of infection caused by a kind of bacteria that live in your mouth. Don't put anything in your child's mouth that has been in your mouth. Don't share cups, spoons etc. Don't clean off a pacifier with your mouth, rinse under water instead. This will prevent bacteria that live in your mouth getting into your child's mouth.

EXAMINE YOUR CHILDREN'S TEETH

Tooth decay can spread very fast. Take time to look at your baby's teeth by lifting their upper lip and looking at the teeth near the gums. If you see bright white spots or brown spots take them to the dentist right away. This is the very beginning of tooth decay.

FIND A DENTIST FOR YOUR CHILD

Children should visit a dentist around their first birthday. Talk to your doctor about finding a dentist. If your child has All Kids insurance, they have coverage to visit a dentist. Also, ask your doctor or dentist about putting fluoride varnish on their teeth. Fluoride varnish helps protect your child's teeth from decay.

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Illinois Chapter