

# VISITING THE DENTIST



**bright smiles**  
FROM BIRTH

## **When should my child visit the dentist?**

Your child should see the dentist 6 months after they get their first tooth or by their first birthday. You should not wait until your child is in pain or has a problem before taking him/her to the dentist.

## **What happens at my child's first dental visit?**

At your child's first dentist visit, the dentist and hygienist will look at your child's teeth to see if they are healthy and make sure their teeth are coming in correctly. They will also look for any signs of cavities or tooth decay. The dentist will ask you questions about what you feed your baby, how you feed your baby, and how you take care of your teeth and your baby's teeth. They will tell you how to care for your baby's teeth to prevent cavities and how to prevent your baby from injuring their teeth. They may also apply fluoride varnish on your child's teeth.

## **How can I find a dentist?**

Ask your child's doctor for the names and numbers of dentists in your area. If your child is covered by All Kids or Medicaid, you can call DentaQuest at 888-286-2447 for a list of dentists. All Kids or Medicaid will pay for your child to see a dentist every six months. You should take your child to the same dentist or office every time.

## **What should I do before I take my child to the dentist for the first time?**

Tell your child that you are going to see the dentist who will look at their teeth. Talk to them, only in a good way, about visiting the dentist and make it fun. Do not tell them it will hurt and do not scare them. Look for children's books that talk about what will happen at the dentist and read them to your child often. Ask your dentist or doctor for tips on getting your child ready for the dentist.

## **How often should I take my children to see the dentist?**

After your first visit, your dentist will tell you when you should bring your child back. Visits should be on a regular basis; usually every six months. You should take your child to the same dentist or office every time. The dentist and their staff will get to you know your child and how best to care for them.

## **What if I cannot find a dentist for my child?**

If you cannot find a dentist in your area, ask your doctor about your child's teeth. They tell you how to care for you child's teeth, help you find a dentist and may apply fluoride varnish.

American Academy of Pediatrics

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Illinois Chapter