



Protect Your Baby from Tooth Decay



Even babies can get tooth decay. You can protect your baby!

You may not know that:

- Your baby can get cavities from the germs in your mouth!
- You or other caregivers can spread these germs to your baby with your/their saliva

These tips can help:

- Get a dental check-up and the treatment you need
- Make sure your own teeth and mouth are healthy
- Never share your baby's spoon or fork
- Don't chew your baby's food or blow on it to cool it, and then give to your baby
- Clean your baby's pacifier with water, not by licking it

When your baby is born – 1 year

- Clean your baby's gums and any teeth every day. Most babies get their first teeth around 6 months of age.
- Use a moist, soft, child's toothbrush or a clean, soft washcloth and water
- Clean your baby's gums and teeth once or twice a day, especially before bedtime
- The last thing to touch the baby's gums or teeth before bedtime should be a toothbrush or water
- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle. If your baby falls asleep at the bottle, take it out of the baby's mouth.

6 months – 1 year

- Let your baby drink with a cup when your baby is 6 months old
- Some babies like to carry around a bottle or training cup. Make sure it has only water in it.
- Don't let your baby use a bottle after 1 year. Use a regular cup, not a sippy cup.
- As soon as your baby's first tooth comes in, check every week for early signs of tooth decay. Look for chalky white areas or brown stains near your baby's gums. If you see any, take your baby to the dentist right away.

Take your baby to the dentist after your baby gets his first tooth. Make sure your baby sees the dentist by age 1.



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1 – 2 years

- Stop bottle-feeding
- Some babies like to carry a training cup around. Make sure it has only water in it.
- Don't give your baby sweet snacks between meals
- Clean your child's gums and teeth with a washcloth or soft toothbrush and a very small dab of fluoride toothpaste
- Check every week for early signs of tooth decay. Look for chalky white areas or brown stains near your baby's gums. If you see any, take your child to the dentist right away.
- Take your child to the dentist for an exam. Ask about fluoride and sealant treatments.

2 – 3 years

- Check every week for early signs of tooth decay. Look for chalky white areas or brown stains near your baby's gums. If you see any, take your child to the dentist right away.
- Brush your child's teeth, or watch your child brush, 2 or 3 times a day. Be sure your child brushes before bedtime.
- Use a tiny dab of fluoride toothpaste with every brushing
- Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste after brushing
- Stay away from sugary drinks like juice or soda
- Don't give your child too many snacks like cookies and candy. Sweet foods help cause tooth decay. Instead, give whole grain foods, nuts, fruits, and vegetables for a healthier diet.
- Take your child to the dentist for an exam. Ask about fluoride and sealant treatments.



When you take care of your baby's teeth early on, you will:

- Protect your baby from pain
- Lower the chances your child will have cavities now or when he or she is older
- Help your child have healthy teeth for a lifetime