



HEALTHY TEETH, HAPPY CHILDREN

Unhealthy teeth may affect your child's overall health

DO BABY TEETH REALLY MATTER?

Baby teeth are very important. They help children chew properly, speak clearly, and guide permanent teeth into the right position. Early loss due to decay may lead to speech problems, and crooked teeth.

Decay or cavities in baby teeth may be painful and, if left untreated, may lead to infections involving nearby teeth.

Children should see the dentist for the first time between the time they get their first tooth and their second birthday. In public clinics this is usually on a first come, first serve basis and requires queueing.

DEVELOP HEALTHY HABITS EARLY

- **Don't** let babies go to bed with a bottle or sippy cup with milk or juice in it - WATER only.
- **Don't** let them sip on a bottle or sippy cup throughout the day with anything but water in it.
- **Don't** give juice to babies younger than 12 months old.

Juice is full of sugar and helps germs in the mouth to grow.

If you decide to give juice, always dilute with at least 50% water, after that, limit it to:

Toddlers: less than ½ a cup a day

Older than 4-year-olds: not more than 1 cup a day.

At 1 year: children should not use a bottle, and use a cup with a lid instead.

- **Avoid introducing** sugar-sweetened drinks (like fizzy drinks, juice drinks, sports drinks, and flavored milks).
- **Avoid introducing** sugary snacks (especially hard sweets like lollipops).

HOW TO CLEAN THEIR TEETH

Even before your baby's first tooth comes in, it's important to keep the gums clean by gently rubbing a clean, damp washcloth over their gums.

THEN...

- Children under 3 years old: Brush your child's teeth twice a day for 2 minutes with a soft toothbrush with a smear (the size of a grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste.
- Children 3 years old and older: Help your child brush twice a day for 2 minutes with a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste. Teach your child to spit the toothpaste out.

Children should have adult supervision when cleaning their teeth until they are 8-years-old.

TOOTH DECAY TIMELINE



Healthy Teeth



Mild Decay



Moderate



Decay



Severe



Decay

DID YOU KNOW?

Cavity: a hole in a tooth that, without treatment, may grow bigger and deeper.

Plaque: is made up of germs, leftover food particles and saliva

Gum disease: irritation of the gums caused by plaque left on the teeth. Over time, gum disease may lead to sore, bleeding gums, and even tooth loss.

Children that are around second-hand smoke are more likely to get cavities.