

# Why Worry About Baby Teeth?

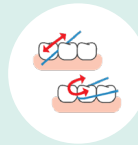


## Baby teeth are important.

They help your child eat and speak – and save space so that permanent teeth don't come in crowded or crooked.

## Babies and toddlers can get cavities.

This can happen as soon as they get teeth, which is usually around 6 months old. Cavities are an infection and can be very painful. Cavities may cause teeth to fall out too soon. If your baby has holes or dark spots in their teeth, they may be cavities.



## Keep your baby healthy and happy by preventing cavities!

- ▶ Before teeth come in, wipe your baby's gums with a wet washcloth every day.
- ▶ Once your baby has teeth, brush them with a soft infant-sized toothbrush with a smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- ▶ After your toddler turns 3, brush with a child-sized toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
- ▶ Be sure to brush your child's teeth twice a day – mornings and before bed.
- ▶ Limit sugary foods and drinks like candy, cookies, juice and chocolate milk. These should be for mealtime only.
- ▶ Use water in your baby's sleep-time bottle – not other drinks.
- ▶ Be sure your child drinks tap water – it's safe. Bottled water may not have fluoride which strengthens the teeth.
- ▶ Visit a dentist at least once a year – start dental visits by baby's first birthday.

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