

# Parenting Tips for Maintaining Your Child's Oral Health



## Oral Health Begins Before Teeth Come In

Wipe the inside of your baby's mouth everyday with a soft, moist washcloth—even before he or she has teeth. Once teeth come in, use fluoride-containing toothpaste and brush your baby's teeth with a soft-bristled toothbrush.

How much toothpaste should I use?

### FOR BABIES

A smear of toothpaste no larger than a grain of rice.



### FOR TODDLERS

A smear of toothpaste the size of a pea.



## When to Schedule Your First Dental Appointment?

First tooth or first birthday = first pediatric dentist appointment.

Remember that a pediatric dentist has additional training beyond dental school to work specifically with babies and children in monitoring early oral development.



## Say Cheese

Did you know cheese is one of the healthiest snacks for your child's teeth? Cheese provides large amounts of calcium and helps fight cavities. Cheddar, Swiss, mozzarella, and Monterey Jack all stimulate the body's salivary glands to clear the mouth of food debris and protect teeth from acids. The calcium and phosphorous found in cheese can also help re-mineralize the enamel of your child's teeth.



## Healthy Brushing and Flossing Habits

Children should floss daily and brush their teeth twice a day: in the morning and at night. School-aged children should be supervised until they are 7 to 8 years of age.

## Nutrition Tips

- Do not give sugary, sticky snacks like candy, juice, or soda between meals.
- Do give your child healthy snacks like cheese, fruit, or vegetables.
- Do not let your baby fall asleep with a bottle of milk or juice at bedtime. The sugars in each will lead to tooth decay.
- Do let your child occasionally have a treat or juice at meal times.



## WEIRD FACT

Did you know cavities can be caused by germs that are passed from adult to child? Babies get germs from saliva that is passed from their caregiver's mouth to their own by sharing spoons, testing foods, or cleaning off a pacifier in a mouth instead of with water.

## WARNING SIGNS

If you see white spots on your baby's teeth, schedule a dentist appointment right away, as this can be the first sign of a cavity.