



## Time for the dentist

Take your child to the dentist within six months of his first tooth appearing or when he is 12 months old, whichever comes first.



# Caring for Baby's Teeth



## How do you stop plaque?

- ❖ Don't clean your baby's pacifier or bottle nipples with your mouth.
- ❖ Avoid tasting your child's food with the same spoon that you use to feed your baby.
- ❖ Avoid using the same spoons, cups or any other feeding utensils with your child.
- ❖ Start to show your baby how to use a cup when he is 6 months old.
- ❖ Try not to feed your child sugary snacks or drinks.
- ❖ Have your child drink water after eating something sugary.
- ❖ After baby's first tooth appears, do not let your baby sip from a bottle throughout the day or sleep with a bottle at night. (Breastfeeding is fine, but don't let him fall asleep at your breast.)



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## Dental Care Dos and Don'ts

### Dos

- ✦ Brush or wipe your child's teeth twice a day
- ✦ Change from a bottle to a cup when baby is 9–12 months
- ✦ Limit sweetened fruit drinks
- ✦ Encourage healthy snacks
- ✦ Have regular healthy meals
- ✦ Check your child's teeth regularly
- ✦ Set a good example: let your child see you brushing your teeth

### Don'ts

- ✦ Don't leave a baby with a bottle at night
- ✦ Don't give sweetened drinks or fruit juices in a bottle
- ✦ Avoid long feeding periods
- ✦ Avoid sweets and sticky snacks
- ✦ Don't put honey or syrup on baby's pacifier
- ✦ Don't give drinks or snacks after teeth have been brushed
- ✦ Don't skip tooth brushing

## Caring for Baby's Teeth

New teeth are precious – and your baby needs your help in protecting them. Here are some tips to help you take care of your child's teeth.

### Babies need their teeth:

- ✦ For chewing
- ✦ For speaking
- ✦ For proper jaw development
- ✦ To hold spaces for their permanent teeth (that grow in later)
- ✦ For smiling

## Teething

Your baby may start teething as early as four months.

- ✦ Your baby may drool more as her teeth come in. You may have to wipe her face more often.
- ✦ If your baby is fussing, give her a teething ring to chew on.
- ✦ Your teething baby may have an upset stomach or be irritable. This is normal.

## Baby's first teeth

A baby's first tooth usually appears at 6-8 months, and her teeth will continue to grow in until she is three years old. Baby teeth are not as strong as adult teeth, so they must be treated carefully. Here are some tips.

- ✦ From the very start, wipe baby's gums twice a day with a clean damp washcloth.
- ✦ As soon as baby's first tooth appears, use a soft toothbrush to brush baby's teeth twice a day
- ✦ Use only a pea-size amount of children's toothpaste on the toothbrush
- ✦ Keep baby's mouth free of bacteria – including the bacteria from your mouth. Do not share utensils with your baby and do not clean pacifiers or bottle nipples with your mouth.
- ✦ Check baby's mouth and teeth regularly for white or brown spots (indicating cavities) and red or bleeding gums. Contact your health care provider if you find any of these.

## Tooth decay (Dental Caries)

Tooth decay is usually caused by eating sugary or acidic foods, or drinking sugary drinks too often. Sometimes cavity-causing bacteria can come from your mouth to your baby's through sharing a spoon or some other way.

## What is plaque?

Plaque is a sticky film on the teeth that can't be seen. It forms daily and contains bacteria (germs) that attack teeth and cause cavities.

