

Protect Your Child's Smile



Infants 0-3 Months



Tips for a Healthy Mouth

Brush teeth twice a day.
Floss once a day.
Go to the dentist twice a year.
Limit sugary snacks and drinks.
Drink water with fluoride.

For more information on oral health:

SC DHEC Division of Oral Health
www.scdhec.gov/oralhealth

SC Helpline for Women,
Children & Infants
Care Line Number: 1-800-868-0404

Connecting Smiles: an outreach effort to integrate preventive oral health information and resources into existing systems of care including medical and dental offices and community-based programs



Breastfeeding and Your Infant's Oral Health

Breastfeeding is recommended as the best way to feed your infant. It provides your infant with what he/she needs to grow and develop and remain healthy throughout life.

Protecting your infant's gums and teeth...

- After teeth come in, do not allow your infant to sleep with the breast in his or her mouth.
- Do not use breastfeeding as a pacifier.
- Wipe your infant's gums and teeth with a clean cloth or gauze morning and night. As more teeth come in, begin a brushing routine using water.
- Look for white or brown spots on both sides of the teeth. Contact a dentist if needed.
- Schedule that first dental visit by the time your child turns 1 year old.



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Why Should I Worry About Taking Care of Baby Teeth?

- Babies and toddlers need healthy teeth for chewing. Poor dental health can affect what your baby is able to eat.
- Babies and toddlers are learning to say words. Teeth play a role in speech development.
- Baby teeth hold the place for the adult teeth.
- Baby teeth lost early because of tooth decay can cause crowding of the adult teeth.
- Decayed baby teeth can lead to pain and infection, affecting your baby's ability to learn.

How Can I Protect My Child's Baby Teeth?

- Get in the habit of regularly wiping down gums and teeth.
- As more teeth come in, begin a brushing routine using water.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- Do not put your baby down with a bottle filled with milk or formula.
- Do not let baby nurse continuously.
- Schedule the first dental visit by the time your child turns 1 year old.



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Teething

When to Expect Teeth to Appear

- Teeth can begin to come in as early as 6 months and as late as 12 months of age.
- The lower two front teeth are usually the first to appear.
- The diagram below shows when teeth come in. Usually teeth come in every few months, in right and left pairs alternating between the upper and lower jaws, and proceeding from the front of the mouth to the back.
- Every child is different. Do not worry if some teeth are a few months early or late.
- By age 3, all 20 baby teeth should be present.

What to Expect When Your Child is Teething

Common signs of teething include:

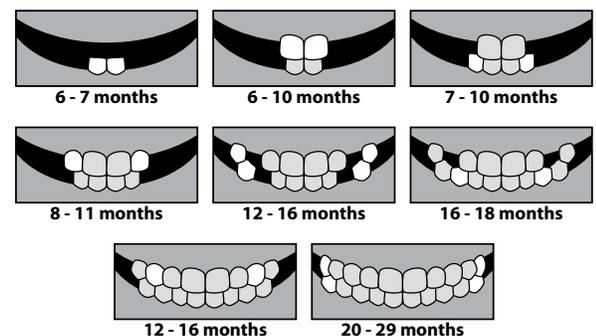
- Discomfort, restlessness, irritability, loss of appetite, and waking during the night.
- Chewing on toys and fingers is very common.
- The amount of saliva may increase, causing your child to drool more and cough as baby tries to clear his/her throat.

Soothing Your Infant While Teething

Give your child chewing objects such as a

- Cold, wet washcloth.
- Hard, solid teething ring.

It is not recommended that you give him an over-the-counter numbing medication.



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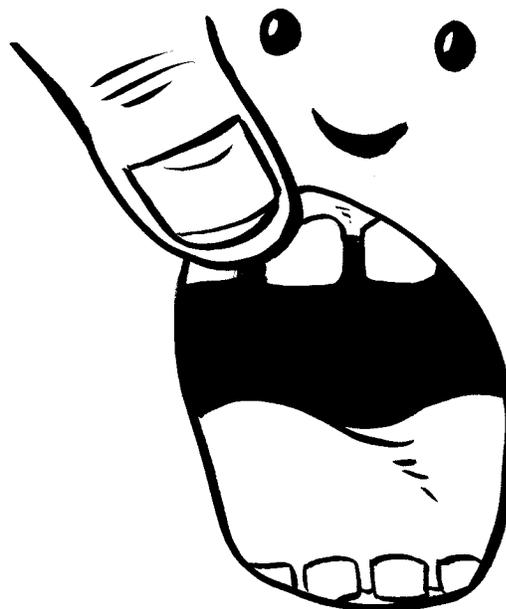
Smile Check

When Teeth Begin to Appear...

Parents/caregivers should begin checking their child's mouth about once a month as soon as teeth begin to appear. This early check will alert the parent of any possible problems. Checking the mouth regularly will also help a child become more comfortable having their mouths and teeth checked.

Tips on Checking Your Child's Mouth...

- Wash your hands before you begin.
- Lift your child's upper lip.
- Look at their gums and teeth.
- Try to examine the inside and outside of the tooth surface.
- As baby gets older check back teeth.
- Early decay may appear as white or brown spots.
- Contact your dentist if you notice any problems.



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Caring for Your Infant's Teeth

After Teeth Begin to Arrive

- Wipe your child's gums, cheeks, tongue and teeth until teeth appear.
- When teeth arrive, begin using a soft bristle, child-sized toothbrush and a small smear of toothpaste.
- Fluoride prevents cavities and makes teeth stronger.

Tips for Brushing Your Infant's Teeth

- Choose a time after feeding when your infant is not fussy or overly tired.
- Cradle your infant's head with one arm and wipe or brush with the opposite hand.
- Place your infant on a changing table, bed, floor or lap.
- Sing, talk and smile with your infant while cleaning their teeth.
- Brush your baby's teeth two to three times a day, preferably after eating. Brushing before bed is most important. Remember not to give your baby anything to eat or drink (except water) after brushing at night.
- Be an example; allow your infant to watch you brush your teeth. This helps teach the importance of good oral hygiene.

A song to share....

Brush, Brush, Brush Your Teeth

Sung to: Row, Row Row Your Boat

Original Author Unknown

*Brush, brush,
brush your teeth.*

At least two times a day.

*Cleaning, cleaning,
cleaning, cleaning
Fighting tooth decay.*

*Floss, floss,
floss your teeth.*

Every single day.

*Gently, gently,
gently, gently,*

Whisking plaque away.

*Rinse, rinse,
rinse your teeth
Every single day.
Swishing, swishing,
swishing, swishing
Fighting tooth decay.*



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The Bottle and Your Infant's Oral Health

Fact:

Using a bottle incorrectly can cause tooth decay.

How?

Liquids such as formula and even breast milk contain sugar. These liquids combine with the germs in a baby's mouth and create an acid. The acid breaks down the tooth and over time can cause tooth decay.

A Few Things To Remember

- Do not use a bottle to calm an infant or to put an infant to bed. Instead of a bottle...
 - Give the infant a favorite blanket or toy.
 - Offer the infant a clean pacifier.
 - Hold, pat, or rock the infant.
 - Read to the infant.
 - Softly talk or sing to the infant.
- Avoid using the bottle as a pacifier.
- Use only formula, breast milk or water in the bottle.
- Hold your baby while feeding.
- Do not add cereal to a bottle. This can lead to tooth decay.
- As an infant begins to eat more solid foods and drink from a cup, he can be weaned from the bottle. Wean the infant gradually at about 9 to 10 months. By 12 to 14 months, most infants can drink from a cup.

