

BABY TEETH “101”

Parent’s Guide to Preventing Early Childhood Caries

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Harris County
Public Health
Building a Healthy Community

WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW



Your baby's oral health is an important part of your baby's overall health.



WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

Your baby is counting on YOU
to help their smile develop into
a happy and healthy one.



WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

Baby teeth are not “throw away” teeth...they are important for:

- Adequate nutrition
- Proper speech
- Maintaining space for permanent teeth to come in straight

WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

Three (3) keys to preventing early childhood caries:

1. Good oral hygiene practices
2. Healthy diet
3. Visiting the dentist





BEFORE YOUR LITTLE ONE ARRIVES

- Parents need to maintain good oral hygiene habits including having a dental check up.
- Parents need to be educated about caring for their infant's oral cavity and gums at BIRTH.



YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR

- Parents should begin cleaning the infant's gums with gauze or a washcloth after each feeding (breast milk or the bottle).
- Parents should never put the baby to bed with a bottle containing anything other than plain water.
- Parents should stop nursing when the baby falls asleep and clean the baby's mouth immediately after the feeding.



YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR

- Parents should start introducing the concept of drinking from a cup by 6 months of age and weaning infants from the bottle by age 1.
- Parents should never dip a pacifier in honey or sugar or add honey or sugar to the baby's milk.
- Parents should clean their baby's mouth after administering medication.

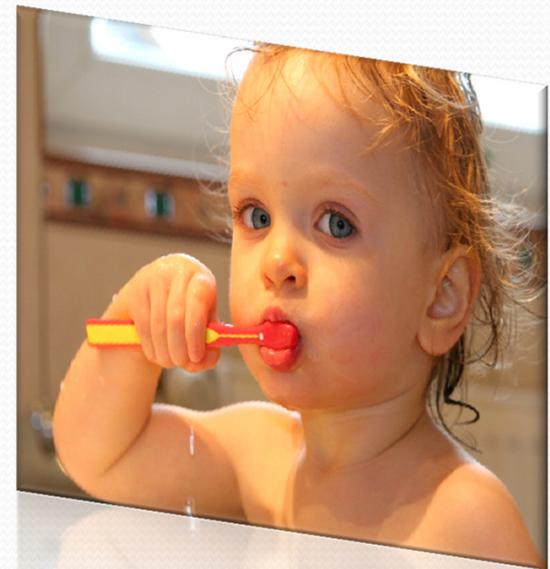


YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR

- Parents should use a soft finger brush with a smear of non-fluoride toothpaste to clean the teeth as soon as they begin to appear in the oral cavity.
- Parents should schedule the 1st dental visit as early as 6 months and no later than 1 year.

TEETH TOOLS FOR TODDLERS

- Parents should begin to use a “safety brush” as the child develops more teeth.
- Parents should continue to use a small smear of age appropriate toothpaste.
- Parents should focus on complete elimination of the bottle if the child is still using a bottle.





TEETH TOOLS FOR TODDLERS

- Parents should limit juice consumption to meal times.
- Parents should not allow a child to walk around with “sippy” cups containing anything other than water.
- Parents should provide a diet of a variety of foods while keeping in mind that healthy fruits and vegetables are better for the child’s teeth and help maintain a healthy body weight.

TEETH TOOLS FOR TODDLERS



- Parents should limit snacks like candy, cookies, crackers and raisins, which can stick to the teeth and are more likely to cause decay.
- Parents should still be the primary oral health care provider because even though your child may enjoy helping, they are not coordinated enough to thoroughly clean their teeth.

TEETH TOOLS FOR TODDLERS

- Parents should be checking their child's teeth for any dark spots that won't go away after brushing.
- Parents should make certain that their child is seeing a dentist at regular intervals - every 3 months, 6 months or 12 months as determined by your dentist.

