

INFANTS AND YOUR DENTIST.



How should I care for my child's teeth?

Brush your child's teeth when the first tooth erupts. No children's toothpaste is necessary until your baby can spit out (usually by 3 year). Use a child size toothbrush with soft bristles. Most babies are eager to "do it themselves" so, once she has the dexterity, let your baby brush on her own after meals with parent doing more thorough cleaning before she goes to bed as part of the bedtime ritual. Floss your child's teeth when all the primary teeth have erupted, usually by age 2 or 2 and ½. You can teach your child proper dental habits from the beginning!

What is fluoride?

Fluoride helps make teeth strong and prevents tooth decay. If the water where you live does not have enough fluoride, your doctor may prescribe fluoride supplements (fluoride drops or pills). You would give these drops or pills every day, starting when your child is about 6 months old. Only give as much as the directions say to use, because too much fluoride can cause spots on your child's teeth. Children should take these drops or pills until they are 12 to 16 years old (or until you move to an area with fluoride in the water).

When should I start taking my child to the dentist?

Take your child for a first dental visit within six months of the first baby tooth and by no later than the first birthday. The second dental visit and regular dental visits should start at 3 years of age.

Why the second dental visit should be at 3 years of age?

Your dentist will discuss the introduction of pea-sized toothpaste into the plaque-removal procedure, encourage the child to begin rudimentary brushing; however, parents should remain the primary caregiver in oral hygiene procedures. In addition, thumb sucking, tongue thrusting and mouth breathing habits will be evaluated.

Does anything help teething?

You can ease the pain by rubbing the gums gently with your finger, letting your child chew on a teething ring or using a pacifier.

Make sure your child gets the fluoride needed for fighting tooth decay. Ask your dentist how your child can get the recommended amount of fluoride.

How does diet affect my child's teeth?

Healthy eating habits lead to healthy teeth. Give your child a variety of foods. Sweets (candy or cookies), starchy foods (crackers) and sticky foods (raisins) stay in the mouth longer, so they can easily cause tooth decay. If your child wants a snack between meals, offer fruits or vegetables. They're better for growing teeth. Limit snacking on foods high in sugar. A proper diet from the five major groups is important.

Is thumb-sucking bad for my child's teeth?

It is normal for children to suck their thumbs, their fingers or pacifiers. Most children give up this habit on their own by the time they are 4 years old and do no harm to their teeth. If your child still has a sucking habit after age 4, tell your dentist. Your dentist can watch for problems as the teeth grow. In most children, there is no reason to worry about a sucking habit until the child is 5 or 6 years old, when the permanent teeth start to come in.

How to avoid "Early Childhood caries" or "Baby Bottle Tooth Decay"?

Don't dip your child's pacifier in honey or sugar – give a clean pacifier!

Never allow your child to fall asleep with a bottle containing milk, formula, fruit juices, or sweetened liquids – put your child to sleep with a bottle of plain water. Try not to let your child walk around using a bottle of milk or juice as a pacifier. Stop nursing when your child is asleep or has stopped sucking on the bottle. Start to teach your child to drink from a cup at about 6 months of age. Plan to stop using a bottle by 12 to 14 months at the latest.

Alan Iitvinov DDS
126 Jackson Road Extension Penfield NY 14526

<http://www.familydentistryrochester.com/>