



## Oral Care for Your Baby/Toddler

### Well Baby Dental Visit

- The ADA recommends parents take children to a dentist no later than their first birthday. At age three, we will start introducing them to having their teeth cleaned.
- During the three year old visit, you can expect the dental team to:
  - o Clean your child's teeth and provide tips for daily care.
  - o Inspect for oral injuries, cavities or other problems.
  - o Let you know if your child is at risk of developing tooth decay.
  - o Discuss teething, pacifier use, or finger/thumb sucking habits.
  - o Discuss treatment, if needed, and schedule the next check-up.
- We will follow up one year after the initial exam. An exam fee will be applied during this visit.

### Daily Care

- For children **younger than 3 years**, caregivers should begin brushing children's teeth as soon as they begin to come into the mouth by using fluoride toothpaste in an amount no more than a smear or the size of a grain of rice. Brush teeth thoroughly twice per day (morning and night). When your child has two teeth that touch, you should begin flossing their teeth daily.
- For children **3 to 6 years of age**, use a "pea-sized" amount of fluoride toothpaste. Brush teeth thoroughly twice per day (morning and night). Supervise children's brushing and remind them not to swallow the toothpaste. When your child has two teeth that touch, you should begin flossing their teeth daily.

### Main Cause of Early Decay

Below are some tips to keep your child's mouth healthy:

- Place only formula, milk, or breast milk in bottles. Avoid filling the bottle with liquids such as sugar water, juice, or soft drinks.
- Infants should finish their bedtime/naptime bottles/nursing before going to bed.
- If your child uses a pacifier, provide one that is clean—don't dip it in sugar or honey, or put it in your mouth before giving it to the child.
- When the mother or caregiver puts the baby's feeding spoon in their mouth, or cleans a pacifier in their mouth, the bacteria can be passed to the baby.
- **Encourage children to drink from a free flowing cup by their first birthday and discourage frequent or prolonged use of sippy cups and bottles. This will aid in proper swallowing and speech development.**
- Serve nutritious snacks and limit sweets to mealtimes. **Avoid sticky, chewy foods such as fruit snacks, raisins, and candy.**

### Nutrition

According to MyPlate, a website from the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, an agency of U.S. Department of Agriculture, a balanced diet should include:

- **Fruits and vegetables.** Combined these should be half of what your child eats every day.
- **Grains.** Make sure at least half of their grains are whole grains, such as oatmeal, whole wheat bread and brown rice.
- **Dairy.** Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy foods.

- **Lean proteins.** Make lean protein choices, such as lean beef, skinless poultry and fish. Try to vary protein choices to include eggs, beans, peas, and legumes, too. Eat at least 8 oz. of seafood a week.

For tips on how to get your children to eat more fruits and vegetables, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website.

### Thumb Sucking (or Finger) & Pacifier

- Sucking may cause problems with the proper development of the mouth and alignment of the teeth. It can also cause changes in the roof of the mouth.
- Pacifiers can affect the teeth essentially the same ways as sucking fingers and thumbs, but it is often an easier habit to break.
- Children should stop sucking pacifier and/or digits by age 3.

### Teething

- As their teeth erupt, some babies may become fussy, sleepless, lose their appetite, or drool more than usual. Diarrhea, rashes, and a fever are not normal symptoms for a teething baby. If your infant has a fever or diarrhea while teething or continues to be cranky and uncomfortable, call your physician.

### Baby Teeth Eruption Chart

