

ORAL HEALTH FOR INFANTS

Did you know?

A baby's teeth begin developing during pregnancy. Tooth buds start forming beneath the gums long before the first tooth appears.

TOOTH TIMELINE

Teeth erupt through the gums in stages. Every child develops at their own pace, so small differences in the timing are perfectly normal.



HOW TO CLEAN A BABY'S MOUTH



It is important to begin caring for your baby's mouth from birth. Although newborns do not have teeth, healthy gums help protect the developing teeth underneath.

Wipe the gums with a clean, damp gauze pad or washcloth, especially after feeds and before bedtime.

BOTTLE-FEEDING TIPS AND PACIFIERS

- ✓ Only put breast milk, formula, milk or water in bottles.
- ✗ Do not add sugar to milk or fill bottles with sugary drinks such as sugar water, fruit juice or soft drinks.
- ✓ Finish bedtime and naptime bottles before your baby goes to sleep.
- ✗ Avoid letting your baby fall asleep with a feeding bottle in their mouth.
- ✗ Never dip a pacifier in sugar or honey.
- ✗ Discourage habits such as thumb-sucking or using a pacifier for too long, as it can affect how your child's teeth and mouth develop.
- ✓ Wean your child off their pacifier by the age of 2½ years.



FIRST TOOTH, FIRST BIRTHDAY MILESTONES



Clean your baby's teeth twice a day as soon as the first tooth appears. It is especially important to brush before bedtime.



Use a smear of fluoride toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice) containing at least 1,000 ppm fluoride.



After brushing, gently wipe away any excess toothpaste using a clean, damp gauze pad or washcloth.



Regular dental check-ups help keep your child's teeth and gums healthy. Take your baby to the dentist when the first tooth appears and no later than their first birthday.



Encourage drinking from an open cup by your baby's first birthday. This helps your baby learn to sip and is better for their teeth.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

Read the Oral health for children fact sheet for practical advice on keeping your child's teeth and mouth healthy as they grow.



World Oral Health Day
20 March



EVERYONE,
EVERYWHERE
IS INVITED
TO JOIN US

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