

SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

Teeth are a critical part of a child's health early on in life.

Baby teeth, as they are often called can be viewed as space holders. While permanent teeth are developing under the gums, baby teeth hold their places on top of the gums. The American Dental Association recommends that the baby visits a dentist within the first six months of getting teeth.

Failure to clean a baby's teeth could lead to poor dental hygiene later in life. This usually presents in the form of "baby bottle tooth decay." This type of decay leads to discoloration of the teeth and pink, puffy gums for the child. Baby bottle decay is caused by the sugars in sweet liquids like milk or fruit juice. These sugars cling to the teeth and create an acid that eats away at them. Avoid giving babies these liquids too many times a day or letting infants fall asleep or take naps with bottles as this can be harmful to teeth.



Healthy Baby Teeth



Baby Bottle Decay Teeth

Here are some other tips to prevent baby bottle tooth decay found on www.ada.org:

1. After each feeding, wipe the baby's gums with a clean gauze pad. Begin brushing your child's teeth when the first tooth erupts. Clean and massage gums in areas that remain toothless, and begin flossing when all the baby teeth have erupted, usually by age 2 or 2½.
2. Never allow your child to fall asleep with a bottle containing milk, formula, fruit juice or sweetened liquids.
3. If your child needs a comforter between regular feedings, at night, or during naps, give the child a clean pacifier recommended by your dentist or physician. Never give your child a pacifier dipped in any sweet liquid.
4. Avoid filling your child's bottle with liquids such as sugar water and soft drinks.
5. If your local water supply does not contain fluoride (a substance that helps prevent tooth decay), ask your dentist how your child should get it.
6. Start dental visits by the child's first birthday. Make visits regularly. If you think your child has dental problems, take the child to the dentist as soon as possible.