

Baby Teeth

Baby teeth are important for:

- smiling,
- eating,
- talking, and
- maintaining the space for permanent teeth.

Healthy teeth are necessary to allow your child to chew food properly. Most children have some of their baby teeth until they are at least 12 years old. Baby teeth that have been taken out early may affect your child's speech. Baby teeth that are decayed should be treated by the dentist before the teeth start to hurt or become infected. Baby teeth maintain the space for adult teeth to come into the mouth in the correct position.

Remember:

- As soon as teeth appear, brush your child's teeth at least twice a day, especially before bedtime, using a child-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Help your child with brushing until they can brush properly, around age 8.
- Use toothpaste with fluoride once your child can spit, at around 3 years old. Toothpaste with fluoride should not be swallowed.
- Use toothpaste designed with children in mind ... adult toothpaste, especially tartar fighting or whitening pastes, is not recommended for children under the age of 12.
- Use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
- Have your child rinse his mouth with water after taking liquid medications or using an inhaler, especially if taken on a regular basis, (e.g. iron supplements, antibiotics, etc.)
- Take your child to the dentist regularly.
- Talk to your dentist about fluoride supplements.
- Give your child nutritious snacks like fruits and fruit juices, milk, vegetables, nuts, seed, cheese, crackers, and breads.

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