

Baby Teeth

Baby teeth are important for:

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

Healthy baby 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.
- Children under three years of age should have their teeth brushed by an adult without toothpaste, unless the child is at high risk for decay.
- Children aged three to eight should be supervised while brushing with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Health Canada recommends that children use no more than a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and be taught not to swallow the toothpaste.
- Adult toothpaste, especially tartar fighting or whitening paste, is not recommended for children under the age of 12 years.
- Have your child rinse his/her 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 fruit, milk, vegetables, nuts, seeds, cheese, crackers, and breads.

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