

Caring for Your Child's Teeth & Gums

A Guide
for Parents
& Childcare Givers



Before 1 year of age

- Wipe your baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth every day after feeding.
- When your baby starts teething, rub the gums softly with a damp washcloth.
- Start brushing with a soft brush as soon as your baby has teeth.
- Check for white or dark spots on your baby's teeth. If you see any spots, go to the dentist.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle.
- Start offering a cup around age 6 months when your baby can sit up.

Don't Forget To Take Care of Your Own Teeth!

1 year old

- Gently brush your child's teeth with a small, soft toothbrush **every day**. Use very short back and forth strokes touching the gums.
- After 12 months, **NO MORE BOTTLES**.
- Take your child to the dentist for their first visit.
- Ask your Doctor or Dentist about fluoride varnish for your child's teeth.

2 – 3 years old

- Brush your child's teeth twice each day with a dab of fluoride toothpaste.
- Take your child to the dentist one or two times per year from now on.
- Limit sweet or sticky snacks and sodas.

3 – 6 years old

- Continue to brush your child's teeth twice per day with a dab of fluoride toothpaste.
- Start to floss your child's teeth up and down on each side of each tooth every day.
- Let your child practice brushing with a small, soft toothbrush after watching you brush your teeth.
- Limit sweet or sticky snacks and sodas.

6 years and older

- Supervise your child's brushing and flossing daily.
- Ask the dentist about sealants for your child's molar teeth.
- Limit sweet or sticky snacks and sodas.

