First
Dental Visit
by
First
Birthday

BABY'S ORAL HEALTH
What Parents Need to Know

Now that your bundle of joy has arrived, there are things you can do to promote your baby's oral health and protect that growing smile. Taking care of your new baby's mouth and gums can not only prevent problems, but also encourage the development of strong, healthy baby teeth and a lifetime of good oral hygiene habits.

Growing Smiles *Pediatric Dentistry*

- Wipe your baby's gums with clean gauze after each feeding.
- Put your baby to bed WITHOUT a bottle to prevent sugars and bacteria from pooling in the mouth.
- Do not share spoons or pacifiers with your baby to avoid the transfer of cavity-causing bacteria.
- Soothe your teething baby by rubbing his/her gums with a clean finger or offering a teething ring.
- Brush your baby's teeth with a soft-bristled toothbrush and water to prevent tooth decay.
- Take your baby to the dentist before his or her first birthday to have an initial examination of the teeth, mouth, and jaw.
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco use.
- Avoid exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Eat a balanced diet, especially if you are a nursing mother.

If you have questions about your baby's oral health, contact your pediatrician or dental care provider. **If you do not have a pediatric dentist, call the Growing Smiles office nearest to you.**

Did you know that . . .

- **Sucking is a natural, soothing activity for baby.**
- **Most babies and toddlers will "kick" the thumb-sucking or pacifier habit between ages two and four.**
- **Cavities can develop as soon as baby teeth appear (at or near six months of age).**
- **Baby teeth keep a space in the jaw for permanent teeth.**
- **Fluoride toothpaste is not recommended until a child reaches age two.**
- **During the first three years of life, 20 baby teeth will erupt in your baby's mouth.**

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