

Healthy Smiles Project



Tips for Keeping Your Child's Teeth Healthy

Your child has all 20 of his baby teeth. These teeth are just as important as adult teeth. They help your child speak and chew well. They also hold space for the adult teeth. Some of these teeth will not fall out until your child is about 12 years of age. Here is what you can do to help your child take good care of his teeth.

- Brush your child's teeth daily to help prevent tooth decay. Help your child to clean his teeth well. Let him practice brushing and spitting. Continue using a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Check your child's teeth regularly. If you see spots or other changes in his teeth or gums when you "lift the lip" call the doctor's office or call your dentist.
- Offer foods that are low in sugar and high in vitamins and minerals to keep your child's teeth healthy. Avoid many snacks of sweet or starchy foods such as cookies or crackers. They can cause cavities and are not nutritious. Serve fruit instead of fruit juice whenever possible. Limit juice to four ounces of 100-percent juice per day. Avoid other sweetened drinks.
- Protect your child's teeth from injury. Do not let him run with anything in his mouth. Help prevent falls by teaching him to use climbing toys correctly. Start the helmet habit by having him wear one on riding toys. Watch him while he plays and make sure other caregivers do the same.
- Buckle your child up on every car ride. Even a minor crash could injure your child's teeth.



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