

Taking Care of Your Child's Teeth



IMPORTANT INFORMATION for parents of children 6 months to 5 years old

Taking care of your baby or young child's teeth and gums is **one of your most important jobs as a parent**. You must learn good dental habits and teach them to your child. You also need to give your child **LOTS** of help everyday brushing and flossing. **Why?** Healthy baby teeth and permanent teeth will help your child to chew nutritious foods better, speak clearly, have a bright, happy smile, and have **healthy teeth and gums throughout life!**

How can you help your child have healthy teeth?

For your baby . . .

- **It's good to nurse your baby.** Your milk doesn't cause cavities and it **DOES** help fight off diseases.
- Don't give your baby your cavity-causing germs. Don't put the pacifier, bottle or spoon in your mouth.
- Wipe your baby's gums with a soft, wet cloth after each feeding.
- When baby teeth start to appear, brush them with a soft child's toothbrush twice a day.
- Put your baby to sleep with a bottle of **water**—not milk or juice—because they can cause tooth decay.
- Take your baby to your dentist for a first visit by the time he/she is one year old.
- Teach your baby to drink from a sipping cup instead of the bottle around the age of one.

For your young child . . .

- Help your child brush and floss **ALL** their teeth every day with a soft brush. Don't let them go to bed with dirty teeth—that's when cavities grow the fastest.
- Take your child to your dentist every 6 months.
- If your child has cavities, get them filled by your dentist right away.
- Discourage thumb sucking after age 4. It can cause crowded, crooked teeth or bite problems.
- Take care of **YOUR** teeth and gums. Cavity-causing germs are contagious so don't share utensils or kiss your child on the mouth.
- Offer your child a variety of healthy foods and snacks. Avoid pop and sugary or sticky foods.



Community Dental Care

828 Hawthorne Avenue East
St. Paul, MN 55106
651-774-2959
www.cdentc.org



Community Dental Care is a member of the Partnership for Improving Children's Oral Health in Ramsey County and a United Way Bright Smiles partner.

© April 2006 by Community Dental Care

Snack Smart for healthy teeth

Fresh fruits & raw vegetables
Whole grain breads
Unsweetened cereals
Milk, cheese & yogurt
Low-fat meats
Nuts & seeds

