Cavity Free at Three Parent Pamphlet (English)

Keeping Your Child's Mouth Healthy

Before Your Baby Has Teeth

How can I help my baby have a healthy smile?

- Good oral care starts even before your baby gets their first teeth. You can help keep your baby from getting the germs that lead to cavities.
- Breast is best. Breast-fed babies have healthier teeth.
- If your baby drinks a bottle, put only milk, formula or water in the bottle.
- Never let your baby fall asleep with a bottle.
- Keep your teeth healthy too. You can spread cavity causing germs to your baby by sharing spoons, or licking your child's pacifier for example.
- Schedule your baby's first dental visit before their first birthday.

When Your Child Has Teeth

How do I care for my child's teeth?

- Once teeth appear, brush your baby's teeth once in the morning and once before bed with a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Use a smear of fluoride toothpaste no more than a grain of rice.
- Use a pea size amount when they learn how to spit.
- Help your child brush their teeth.
- Choose food and drinks that are low in added sugar. Juice and soda have sugar.
- Transition from a bottle to an open top cup when your child is one year old.
- Drink milk with meals. Drink water between meals.
- Plan snacks between meals to avoid snacking all day.

Keeping Baby Teeth Healthy

Why are baby teeth important?

- Kids with cavities in their baby teeth are more likely to have cavities in their adult teeth.
- To help chew healthy, crunchy foods.
- To hold space in the mouth for permanent teeth that are growing under the gums.
- When a tooth is lost too early, teeth can drift into the space and make it difficult for adult teeth to find room. This can cause crooked and crowded teeth.
- Because cavities are painful!

Fluoride

What Does Fluoride do and Why is it Important?

Fluoride strengthens teeth and prevents cavities.

Drinking tap water with fluoride reduces cavities by 25% in everyone who drinks it.

Ask your doctor about fluoride supplements if your water is not fluoridated.

Ask your medical or dental provider about fluoride varnish, which can be painted on teeth to strengthen tooth enamel.

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