



Your Child's Oral Health

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tooth decay is the most common childhood disease. Although mostly preventable, tooth decay can affect a child's oral health as soon as teeth develop. Tooth decay can also cause pain and interfere with a child's ability to eat, speak, smile and concentrate. Good oral health is essential to a child's overall health and well-being. Starting good oral habits now will help keep your child's teeth healthy for many years to come.

Here are some tips to help your child establish good oral health habits:

- Clean your baby's gums and mouth with a wet washcloth after eating and drinking.
- Remember, baby teeth are important. They help children speak and chew properly. Baby teeth also reserve space for permanent teeth until they begin to emerge.
- Take your child to the dentist no later than their first birthday. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that a child see a dentist after their first tooth appears, usually between six and 12 months old.
- Once teeth emerge, use a small, soft-bristled toothbrush to brush in soft, gentle circles twice a day with a small smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- To prevent "baby bottle" tooth decay, do not put a child to sleep with a bottle full of milk or juice. Instead, give your baby a bottle filled with water before nap or bed time.



- Supervise brushing until your child can brush by him or herself. Use no more than a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste and make sure children do not swallow excess toothpaste.
- Make sure your child has a balanced diet with plenty of calcium and vitamin D to increase calcium absorption. These nutrients are necessary for building strong teeth and keeping gums and mouth tissues healthy.
- Encourage your child to drink water instead of sugary or acidic beverages.
- Make sure your child wears a mouthguard when playing sports to help protect their teeth, lips, cheeks and gums from sports-related injuries.

It is essential to begin a proper oral hygiene routine early in a child's life. This will help ensure the development of strong and healthy teeth. Talk with your dentist for more expert tips on how to take care of your child's teeth at home.

Visit **truassure.com** for more oral health resources and information.