Baby Teeth Are Very Important!

Children need their teeth for smiling, talking and eating food. Baby teeth also help make sure there is room in the mouth when it’s time for permanent teeth. Moms, dads and other caregivers must help take care of teeth.

Babies are not born with the germs (bacteria) that cause tooth decay (cavities). Caregivers pass the germs from saliva (spit) in their mouth to baby. This happens when you put anything that has been in your mouth into baby’s mouth like spoons, cups, toothbrushes and pacifiers.

So remember: Get it done by one.

Get it done by one!
Why should I take my baby for a dental check-up?

Tooth decay germs can start the process of making cavities before baby gets that first tooth.

**Visiting the dentist early:**
- gives your child a “dental home.”
- sets up a pattern of regular dental visits.
- lets the dentist take care of your child’s teeth and find problems before they cause serious pain.

When should my child see the dentist for the first time?

Most pediatric dentists (dentists that focus on treating children) want to see a child by the time their first tooth appears. This usually happens between 6 and 12 months of age.

Things you can do at home:
- Start cleaning your new baby’s mouth, gums and tongue right after feeding with a clean cloth and water.
- As soon as you can see teeth, use a soft infant toothbrush and water to brush baby’s teeth. Brush AT LEAST twice a day, in the morning and before bed.
- Parents should help infants to drink from a cup starting slowly at 6 months of age.
- For toddlers, teeth should be brushed for 2 minutes with an age appropriate toothbrush with a small dab of fluoride toothpaste. Use short strokes on both the inner and outer surfaces of the teeth. Wipe off any extra toothpaste until your child can spit it out.
- Make sure to get the back of the teeth, the tongue and to floss where teeth touch.
- Provide a well balanced diet and avoid giving your child sweets.

Things that can help avoid cavities and tooth decay:
- Do not give candy, soda, sweet drinks or other sweet, sticky foods that can cause cavities.
- Eat nutritious foods like fresh fruits, vegetables, yogurt and cheeses.
- Do not put baby to bed with a bottle or sippy cup of milk or juice. Only water should be given at bedtime.
- Sippy cups and bottles should not be carried around during the day.
- Save juice and milk for meal times. Serve water the rest of the day.
- Rinse your child’s mouth with water after snacks.
- If you see white spots on your baby’s teeth, take them to the dentist right away. White spots can be the first sign of decay.