Get it done by one!

Student Project by
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When should your 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.
Benefits of the one year 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
Baby teeth are very important!

- Children need their teeth for smiling, talking, and eating food.
- Baby teeth help make sure there is room in the mouth when it’s time for permanent teeth.
- Unhealthy baby teeth can cause pain, embarrassment, other health problems, and unhealthy adult teeth.
- Moms, dads, and other caregivers must help take care of baby’s teeth.
Babies are not born with the germs that cause tooth decay!

Caregivers pass the germs (bacteria) that cause tooth decay (cavities) 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.
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.
Things you can do at home (continued):

- 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.
Keep baby’s teeth clean...

Avoid cavities and tooth decay!
Things you can do to 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.
More things you can do to help avoid cavities and tooth decay:

- 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 tooth decay.
Remember:

Taking your child to the dentist before the age of one starts good oral health habits and can find problems before they cause serious pain.

Get it done by one!
Thank You

To learn more about children’s dental health or to make an appointment*, call the Peoria City/County Health Department Dental Clinic at 309/679-6141.

*Income Guidelines Apply.