

Toddler Tooth Tips

Benefit of dental home for your child by age one

- Education for prevention of dental diseases
- Prevention of orthodontic problems
- Patient of record for ease of obtaining emergency care

Toothbrushing and flossing

Begin cleaning the teeth as soon as they erupt

DO NOT start a toothpaste with fluoride until your child can spit unless instructed by the dentist (why? - risk getting fluorosis = white and brown specks on the adult teeth)

Begin flossing as soon as any 2 teeth touch - especially after eating chicken or fibrous foods - like apples or mangoes

Parent supervise toothbrushing and flossing until your child can clean the dishes after supper or wash your car or near the age of 8

Diet Suggestions

Avoid juice and soda (contain lots of sugar and acid)

AAP Guidelines - no more than 4 ounces of sweet liquid per day for toddlers

Avoid frequent sipping on sweet liquids

Avoid sticky or dried fruit or fruit snacks (roll-ups or leathers)

Avoid eating or drinking during the night (decreased saliva at night)

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Avoid sour candies - Skittles, Starbursts (acid burns holes in teeth!)

Fluoridated water

Fluoride re-mineralized and protects the tooth from acid destruction

Make sure to check your home water supply for its fluoride content (we can provide take home water testing kits)

Drink Fluoridated bottled water if your water supply is **NOT** fluoridated

Note BRITA water filters and filters attached to your faucet do **NOT** remove fluoride from the water.

Reverse osmosis filters (located under your sink) do remove fluoride

Habits - pacifiers, thumbs, fingers

American Academy of Pediatrics recommends pacifier use in the first year of life to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) (AAP.org - SIDS Policy Statement)

Goal is to encourage the cessation of digit sucking habits by age 5 before permanent teeth begin to erupt avoid cross-bites or protrusive incisors

Use positive reinforcement to help stop the habit



Toddler Tooth Tips Continued

ECC+ Early Childhood Caries (CDC term for tooth decay)

Direct causes of De-mineralization (cavities)

- Frequent juice and/or snacks
- Sweet liquids (juice, soda) in sippy cup or bottle
- Sticky foods (raisins, gummies - even gummy vitamins)
- Liquid medicine - contains 50% sugar
- GE Reflux - stomach acid on the teeth

Factors that contribute to DEMINERALIZATION (cavities)

- Parent with cavity history
- Tight or crowded teeth
- Tooth defects* (soft or groovy teeth)
- Medical conditions - congenital heart disease, asthma
- Inconsistent oral hygiene
- Tight lips - contribute to food holding and make toothbrushing difficult
- Inability to use tongue to naturally clean teeth (tongue-tied)
- Food holder or slow swallower
- Xerostomia (dry mouth)

Dental radio-graphs - first x-ray are needed

- After the dentist can no longer see between the back baby molars - (average age 4)
- After a cavity develops or a dental injury occurs

Mouth trauma

- Child proof your home - remove sharp corners (coffee tables)
- Frenum tear (skin under upper lip) - bleeds a lot! Keep head above heart and put washcloth over tear to stop bleeding. Rarely needs stitches.
- Concussion injury (bumped tooth) tooth may turn yellow or dark gray. Watch for abscess formation if tooth is dark.
- Luxation (pushed forward or backward) reposition tooth ASAP
- Intrusion (pushed into gum) - allow to re-erupt
- Avulsion (tooth knocked out) - locate tooth. **DO NOT** replant a baby tooth