

Why Baby Teeth are Important:

- Baby teeth create the foundation for the adult teeth.
- If babies lose their teeth too early due to decay, their adult teeth may have difficulty erupting properly. This can lead to crowding of the teeth.
- Teeth help with eating and speaking; not being able eat or speak due to cavities can lead to issues with development.



Image of early childhood caries

How Nutrition Impacts Baby Teeth:

- The food your child eats can impact the health of their teeth
- Sugary beverages such as milk and juice can cause cavities in children's teeth
- These cavities are called early childhood caries and are a significant disease among children

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A Caregiver's Guide to Childhood Oral Health

Why your child's dental health
matters now!



Presented By: Northern Arizona
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Nutrition Tips for New Caregivers:

- Foods that contain vitamins and minerals are good for children to have
- Limit or avoid foods that contain starches, sugar, or are highly acidic

Good foods

- Nuts and seeds
- Vegetables (kale, spinach, and broccoli)
- Milk, cheese, yogurt, and eggs
- Apples, strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries
- Drink plenty of water
- Chew sugar-free gum

Bad Foods

- Sugary beverages (soda, sports drinks, juices)
- Chips, bread, and pasta
- Candy, especially gummy and sticky types

Beginner Tips for Oral Health Care:

- First appointment: once their first baby teeth begin to erupt (around 6 months) or by the time of their first birthday.



1. Use a small (pea sized) amount of low fluoride toothpaste beginning at 18 months.
2. Use a soft wet cloth or a child's soft toothbrush and brush gently along the gumline.
3. After brushing, encourage your child to spit out any excess toothpaste. Avoid swallowing.
4. Spitting may be difficult for children, and the caregiver may have to show them how.
5. Brush twice a day. Establish a routine with your child!
6. Gently floss between any teeth that are touching.

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

- Who?
 - Infants and toddlers around the ages of 12 months-18 months
- What?
 - Occurs when a child's teeth are exposed to sugary liquids for long periods of time
- When?
 - Frequent nursing on milk (including breast milk), formula, or juice at bedtime or naptime.
- Where?
 - Baby bottle tooth decay occurs mainly on the child's front teeth, but it can be present throughout the mouth.
- Prevention tips:
 - Never send the child to bed with a bottle containing a sugary drink
 - After feeding, wipe child's teeth and gums with a clean washcloth/toothbrush

