

Oral Health for Babies & Toddlers

Your baby's first tooth will normally start to appear in the mouth between 4 and 10 months of age. The first tooth is usually the lower front tooth, but like all milestones, it's different for every child, so don't worry if your baby gets their teeth earlier or later than other kids. If you have any concerns, your dentist will be able to help.

Key Tips for Babies & Toddlers:

- Breast milk is the recommended nutrition for babies
- Breast milk is not associated with dental caries
- Infants should never go to sleep with a bottle
- Comfort sucking on a bottle should be discouraged
- Teats and pacifiers should never be put in sugar, jam, honey, or any sugary substance
- From 6 months on infants should be encouraged to transition to dinking from a cup
- Toddlers should only drink from a cup
- Fluoridated tap water is the best drink
- Plain milk is a healthy drink choice
- Babies and toddlers do not need fruit juices or any sweetened beverages
- Encourage healthy meals and snacks that are tooth friendly – this includes milk, cheese, fresh fruit and vegetables
- Make sure your baby has their first dental visit by 12 months of age, and has regular dental visits after that
- Be positive about visits to the dentist – we don't want young children to fear the dentist

Oral Hygiene for Babies & Toddlers:

- From the time that teeth first erupt until the aged of 17 months, children's teeth should be cleaned by an adult using a soft small children's toothbrush, but not using toothpaste.
- From 18 months to five years (inclusive), the teeth should be cleaned twice a day with children's toothpaste (500–550ppm fluoride).
- Toothpaste should always be used under supervision of a responsible adult, a small pea-sized amount should be applied to a child-sized soft toothbrush.
- Children should be taught to spit out the toothpaste, and not swallow or rinse after brushing.
- ***Young children should not be permitted to lick or eat toothpaste.***