



Tips for Maintaining Your Child's Oral Health

- Schedule routine check-ups. If it's been more than six months since your child has seen a dentist, schedule an appointment as soon as possible.
- Clean your baby's gums daily. Until those teeth come in gently wipe a damp washcloth over the gums to clear away harmful bacteria after each feeding.
- Start brushing with the first tooth. Begin brushing your baby's teeth when you see one coming in with an infant toothbrush. Use water and a tiny bit of fluoride toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice).
- Brush twice each day for two minutes. Children ages 2-6 should use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Always supervise

kids younger than six years old while brushing, as they are more likely to swallow toothpaste.

- Begin flossing. Once your child's teeth touch, you can start flossing in between them.
- Snack healthy! Fruit juice, sports drinks, fruit snacks, and sticky candies all pose serious threats to your child's teeth. Give kids calcium-rich snacks like cheese or low-sugar yogurt. If you have to resort to candy – a chocolate bar is preferable to gummy or sticky sweets that can get lodged in between the teeth, even after brushing.
- Keep them hydrated! Avoid sugary drinks and stick to good old-fashioned water. Water helps to rinse away any sugar or particles that can lead to cavities. Many municipal water sources also contain fluoride, which is recommended by the American Dental Association and U.S. Surgeons General, among others, as an efficient way to prevent tooth decay. In fact, the theme of this year's National Children's Dental Health Month is celebrating 75 years of water fluoridation.
- Replace your child's toothbrush every three to four months.