

Baby Teeth Are Important!



Tooth Decay is Preventable:

- ▶ Eat well and take special care of your teeth during pregnancy.
- ▶ Begin baby's oral care the 1st week.
- ▶ Wipe baby's gums daily from birth, then brush teeth twice daily once present.
- ▶ Ensure baby has swallowed all breastmilk* before lying down. Gums and teeth should **always** be cleaned before bedtime.
- ▶ Lift/lower the lips monthly to check teeth. If changes are noticed, contact a dental professional.
- ▶ The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) recommends an assessment by a dentist within 6 months of eruption of the first tooth, or by 12 months of age. Prior to the visit with the dentist, the Health Unit Oral Health Team can provide oral health information and a free dental screening.
- ▶ Severe decay can affect your child's health.

A first dental visit is recommended by baby's first birthday.

**If you have made the informed decision to formula feed, these recommendations also apply to your baby.*

Did You Know?

Oral health affects our overall health. Healthy baby teeth are necessary for good nutrition, speech development, and self-esteem.

Signs of Early Childhood Tooth Decay (ECTD)

- ★ ECTD initially appears as white chalky areas at the gum line
- ★ It can progress to brown spots on enamel
- ★ Top front teeth usually show signs first



HEALTHY TEETH



MILD DECAY



MODERATE DECAY



SEVERE DECAY

Did You Know?

Cavity causing bacteria can be transferred to your baby through saliva. Cutlery, soothers, food and drinks should not be shared.

Toddler Care

- ★ For oral health, water is the best choice between meals and snacks.
- ★ Breastfeeding is recommended up to 2 years and beyond.
- ★ Start using an open cup at 6 months of age when solid foods are started.
- ★ Speak to your dental professional about tooth friendly foods and drinks.
- ★ Proper dental hygiene is important to ensure sugars are removed from teeth.
- ★ Children under 3 should have their teeth brushed using only water twice a day by an adult. A health professional may recommend the use of fluoridated toothpaste over water alone if the child is at a risk of developing tooth decay. Use an amount of toothpaste equal to the size of a grain of rice.
- ★ Start flossing once a day when the teeth are touching.