

Professional Dental Care:

Pediatric Dentists are dental specialists who have been trained to address the special needs of children, through behavior management techniques and in some cases various type of sedation techniques. Many good pediatricians and pediatric dentists work as a team to educate “new parents” on the importance of proper home and professional dental care for children.

It is recommended that a child first visit a pediatric dentist 6 months after the eruption of the first teeth and no later than 2 years of age. This way, the pediatric dentist can not only evaluate the child’s dental status and oral hygiene, but also educate on the various aspects of proper dental care. Following the initial visit, subsequent 6-month “recare” appointments are usually scheduled for dental examinations, professional cleanings, fluoride treatment, and any necessary radiographs (x-rays).

It is important to choose a pediatric dentist who will help you prevent dental cavities as well as repair those already formed. We at BabyTeeth Children’s Dentistry strongly believe in the importance of preventive dental care. Through proper education, timely professional care, and proper home care, the oral health and well-being of your child will be achieved.

We have developed this brochure to stimulate a greater desire for learning about children’s dental health. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Payman Pirnazar D.D.S., M.S.,
Pediatric Dentist

For More Information:

Contact BabyTeeth Children’s Dentistry:



10921 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1103
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Tel: (310) 443-9596
Fax: (310) 443-9786
E-mail: info@BabyTeeth.com

Or Visit

BabyTeeth Online @

BabyTeeth.com <

for more information and
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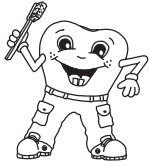
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The BabyTeeth

Pocket Dental Guide For Parents



Provided by:
Payman Pirnazar D.D.S., M.S., Inc.



Importance of Baby Teeth:

It is very important for parents to be properly educated on the importance and proper care of the baby teeth. The baby teeth not only play an important role in the chewing and digestion of food, they also serve many functions in the growth and development of a child such as speech development. It is important to realize that baby teeth also play a vital role in maintaining space for future permanent teeth that erupt to replace the baby teeth.

Tooth Eruption Sequence:

Approximately 5 months after birth, the first **primary teeth**, often called **baby teeth**, begin erupting. Although the pace and order of eruption of teeth may vary, usually the first baby teeth to erupt are the lower front teeth (central incisors), followed closely by the upper central incisors. There are a total of 20 baby teeth, all of which usually erupt by age 3.

There is a maximum of 32 **permanent teeth**, the first of which start erupting at around 6 years of age. The first permanent teeth to erupt are usually the front teeth (central incisors), which replace the primary central incisors, and the first molars, which erupt behind the primary molars. The tooth eruption sequence generally starts earlier in girls than it does in boys. Also, often the lower teeth erupt prior to their counterparts in the upper dental arch.

Dental Cavities:

The term **dental cavities**, also known as **dental caries** or **dental decay**, simply refers to holes or “cavities” made on the surface of a tooth. Although sugar-containing products such as candy have historically been blamed for “causing” dental cavities, it is important to realize the sugar products themselves do not directly *cause* dental cavities.

The mouth of healthy individuals, whether a child or an adult, normally harbors millions of microscopic bacteria, many of which reside on the surfaces of the teeth. These bacteria ingest the sugar products and in return release an acidic by-product into their environment. Over a period of time this acid breaks down the hard structure of the teeth, eventually leading to formation of dental cavities.

In addition to candy, other foods including soda pop, milk, and fruit juices are notorious contributors to the formation of dental cavities. Many fruits and their juices, including oranges, lemons, and grapefruits not only contain high levels of sugar but they are also very acidic in nature.

Studies have shown that even more important than the amount of consumption of sugary foods is the frequency of their consumption. Therefore, reducing the number of snacks eaten between meals may minimize the risk of dental cavities.

Early Childhood Tooth Decay:

Early Childhood Tooth Decay is a term which usually refers to dental caries found in young children under 3 years of age. Since this type of decay usually affects children who have been nursed or bottle fed milk or juice for a

long period of time, other terms such as **nursing bottle caries** or **milk bottle caries** have been used to describe this situation.

Early Childhood Tooth Decay is a more common problem in children who are primarily cared for by some one other than a parent including nannies, housekeepers, or nursery schools. Many children frequently fall asleep while drinking milk or juice through a bottle. While these children sleep, their teeth are often bathing in the milk or juice. This long-term exposure to milk and juice greatly increases the occurrence of dental cavities as well as the rate of progression once they are formed. *With proper education, home and professional dental care, Early Childhood Tooth Decay can be prevented.*

Home Dental care:

It is extremely important to provide proper care and cleaning of a baby's first teeth. The cleaning should begin as soon as the teeth have erupted. During the first few months, a damp cloth or a special baby tooth-cleaning product, such as the Infa-Dent® (available at most drug stores), should be used to wipe the teeth after every feeding.

Because many children under age 3 may be unable to expectorate (spit out) and instead swallow, only a tiny amount of fluoridated toothpaste should be used until the child is older and can expectorate the toothpaste after brushing. It is a good idea to consult your dentist or physician concerning fluoride for children under age 3. As you know, a variety of toothbrushes and toothpastes are available. Inviting your children to choose the flavor of toothpaste or the color of their toothbrush can be a great way to help them take an active role in their dental care!