

What to expect at the first visit...

Usually in the first visit, the dental team (hygienist and dentist) will look inside your child's mouth, count the teeth that are present and assess any problems. They will discuss diet as well as show you how to properly clean your child's teeth.

Depending on the age of your child he/she may be able to sit in the dental chair alone. However, for very young children, it is just as easy to have them sit or lay back in their parent's lap. That way, they feel comfortable with you nearby!

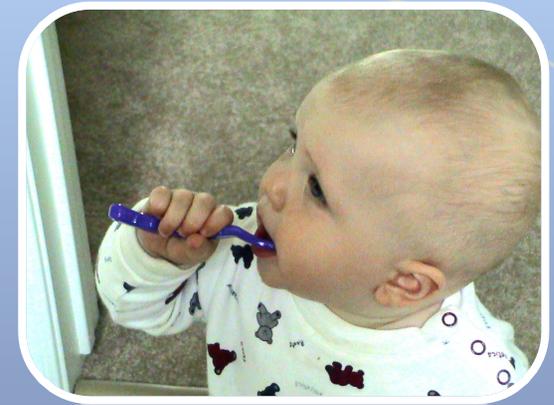
Depending on cooperation, your child may also have his/her teeth cleaned. If this doesn't happen, don't worry - we understand that attention spans are short at a young age! However, be sure to ask any questions you have as a caregiver. This is your appointment too!



Setting families up for success...

By seeing your baby within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth, or by age 1 we are able to help you establish oral health routines and habits that set the stage for a lifetime of positive experiences. We can also answer questions that you may have about your baby's teeth, diet, and habits.

If the first time your child visits the dentist is when there is a problem, they have no prior experience with us, and that can be a little overwhelming for everyone! By establishing a "dental home" early on, your child will see the dental office as a positive, caring, and fun place to visit.



First Visit, First Tooth

...some answers to common questions about your baby's oral health.



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Our office, the Canadian Dental Association, and the Nova Scotia Dental Association, recommend a first visit within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth, or by age 1.



How should I be cleaning my baby's mouth and teeth?

It is important to start cleaning your baby's mouth, even before the teeth erupt. This allows your child to get used to the routine as well as keeps the gums healthy. Nothing fancy is needed to clean your baby's mouth; just a damp facecloth wrapped around your finger will do the trick! Wipe gently around the gums twice a day. You do not need to use toothpaste.

Once the teeth begin to erupt, you can begin to use a small, SOFT bristled toothbrush with warm water to gently clean the teeth and gums. For children under 3, your dentist can determine if your child needs to use toothpaste with fluoride. Also, until age 10, you need to be the one officially cleaning their teeth! Your child can be brushing but they need you to insure that they are reaching all the teeth. No matter how independent they are, they still need your help to do a good job!

Are soothers or thumb-sucking a problem?

The sucking reflex is a natural one for babies. There is no evidence that a sucking habit in babies or toddlers will cause problems in the teeth later on. However, the habit should be stopped before the permanent, adult teeth start to come in (usually around age 5 or 6). After this point, such a habit can affect how the teeth and jaw grow.

Never dip a soother in honey or sugar as this can cause cavities. Also babies should not take bottles to bed with anything other than water in them as this greatly increases the risk of tooth decay.

My child doesn't eat junk food. Can they still get cavities?

Even the healthiest, cleanest mouths have bacteria. This bacteria uses the sugars from our diets and in turn, creates acid in our mouths. It is this acid that starts the breakdown of the teeth, to form tooth decay (cavities).

Even fruits and vegetables have natural sugars that the bacteria can use to create acid. Also, fruit juices (which are high in sugar) and acidic foods (citrus, pickled foods) can increase risk of tooth decay.

Sticky, sugary foods such as dried fruits, fruit leather, gummies etc. are problematic because they can get stuck in the grooves of the teeth and are difficult to clean out. This causes the grooves of teeth to be a common starting point for cavities. As your child gets older, your dentist may recommend having "sealants" put in the grooves to prevent decay from starting there.



The baby teeth are going to fall out. Why should I worry about them?

Some of your child's "baby" teeth will be in their mouths until they are 12! These teeth play an important role in holding the space that the adult teeth will need when they erupt. If a baby tooth gets decay it can be painful for your child, affecting their eating, sleeping, and concentration at school. If baby teeth have to be removed, that can mean that the incoming adult teeth may not have the room they need, causing problems in the future.