

# Steps for Oral Health in Young Children

Age	Development Notes	Feeding	Home care	Dental Office Care
<b>Pregnancy</b>	<p>Fetus affected by chemicals in cigarettes - Seek help and quit smoking -</p> <p>Baby teeth start to grow between 3-6 months of pregnancy</p>	<p>Eat a Healthy Diet with plenty of protein, calcium, Vitamins A, C, &amp; D</p> <p>Drink plenty of fluoridated water</p>	<p>Regular brushing and flossing</p> <p>Rinse, but avoid brushing right after vomiting</p>	<p>Address all tooth decay and dental needs - much less time once the baby arrives</p> <p>Choose dental office for baby - check that Dr. is on insurance plan</p>
<b>Birth</b>	<p>Children breastfed for 6 months 72% less likely to have crooked teeth 1</p>	<p>breastfeeding/formula -</p> <p>Use fluoridated water for mixing formula</p> <p>Do not “clean” nipples or pacifier with saliva</p>	<p>Clean mouth with soft toothbrush (no paste until teeth appear)</p>	<p>Choose dental office for baby - check that Dr. is on insurance plan</p>
<b>4 months</b>	<p>Need for sucking less - do not put back pacifier if child spits it out</p> <p>Lower bottom middle teeth may start to come in</p> <p>Permanent teeth start to grow</p>	<p>Do not add sugar to a bottle</p> <p>Give breast milk (preferred) or formula, baby is too young for juice</p> <p>Start solid foods</p>	<p>Clean mouth with soft toothbrush</p> <p>To sooth teething, rub gums with cold spoon or clean finger or use a clean teething ring; do not use alcohol, gels or teething tablets*</p>	<p>Choose dental office for baby - check that Dr. in on insurance plan</p>

<b>6 months</b>	4 front teeth push through gums (may appear earlier or later)	Bottle/breast feed only during normal meal times  Use only water in bottle, especially at bedtime; avoid adding sugar  May start drinking from cup. Do not give juice	Brush teeth with a soft bristle brush and a smear of fluoride toothpaste (no more than a grain of rice)	Visit dentist when teeth appear  Get fluoride varnish
<b>1 year</b>	Upper 4 front teeth push through gums	<b>Stop use of bottle</b> Use cup for drinking  Give fruit rather than juice; limit juice to 4-6 oz day	Stop/reduce use of pacifier  Lift-the-lip & look for color changes  Brush teeth with a soft bristle brush and a smear of fluoride toothpaste (no more than a grain of rice)	Visit dentist: —Dental Exam —Fluoride varnish —Show dental professional how you brush your child's teeth and ask for tips —Discuss diet
<b>18 months</b>	Lower bottom incisors push through gums  Upper 1st molars then lower 1st molars then upper canines then lower canines push through gums	Give fruit rather than juice; limit juice to 4-6 oz per day	Brush child's teeth; lift the lip and look for color changes	Visit dentist: —Dental Exam —Fluoride varnish —Show dental professional how you brush/floss your child's teeth and ask for tips —Discuss diet
<b>2 years</b>	Lower 2nd molars push through gums	Give fruit rather than juice; limit juice to 4-6 oz per day	Brush child's teeth; lift the lip and look for color changes	Visit dentist: —Dental Exam —Fluoride varnish —Show dental professional how you brush/floss your child's teeth and ask for tips —Discuss diet

<b>3 years</b>	All 20 baby teeth are in	Give fruit rather than juice; limit juice to 4-6 oz per day	Brush child's teeth with a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste; lift the lip and look for color changes; floss teeth when 2 teeth touch	Visit dentist: —Dental Exam —Fluoride varnish —Show dental professional how you brush/floss your child's teeth and ask for tips —Discuss diet Varnish —Discuss ways to discontinue thumb/pacifier sucking
<b>4 years</b>	Jaw & facial bones grow to make room for adult teeth  Child should no longer be using pacifier or sucking thumb	Give fruit rather than juice; limit juice to 4-6 oz per day	Brush child's teeth; lift the lip and look for color changes	Fluoride Varnish; review brushing skills and diet; discuss ways to discontinue thumb/pacifier sucking
<b>5 years</b>	Adult teeth continue to develop and may start to come in.	Give fruit rather than juice; limit juice to 4-6 oz per day	Brush child's teeth; lift the lip and look for color changes	Fluoride Varnish; review brushing/flossing skills and diet
<b>6 years</b>	Adult 1st molars and central incisors come in; front baby teeth start to fall out	Give fruit rather than juice; limit juice to 4-6 oz per day	When child can tie his/her shoes, child can brush teeth on own.	Visit dentist: —Dental Exam —Sealants —Fluoride varnish —Brushing

Dentist may recommend more frequent dental visits based on needs of child

\* Teething gels such a Orajel may cause a rare but possibly fatal methemoglobinemia

1 PediatricsPEDIATRICS Volume 136, number 1, July 2015, Peres, et al