

Caring for Your Child's Teeth



INFANTS

- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends cleaning your child's gums starting at birth using a soft cloth and water.
- Once you see your child's first tooth, you can begin to use a soft infant toothbrush with no more than a rice sized amount of fluoride toothpaste or water.
- To prevent tooth decay, it is important to brush your infant's teeth before bedtime to clean off the sugars from formula, breast-milk, or baby foods she eats during the day.
- After your child has her first tooth or reaches his first birthday, you should schedule your child's first dental appointment.



PACIFIERS, THUMB, AND FINGER SUCKING

- Thumb and finger sucking can begin in the womb. Sucking for infants provides a sense of comfort.
- Pacifiers are often used as a way to calm children, but should never be dipped in sugary foods or drinks before giving them to a child.
- Most children between the ages of two and four begin to naturally stop sucking on their thumbs, fingers, or pacifiers. If they do not stop on their own, long-term use of a pacifier, thumb, or finger sucking can affect the shape of the mouth and position of the teeth. Talk to your dentist, pediatrician, or other healthcare professional about strategies to help your child stop using these things.



TODDLERS

- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends brushing your child's teeth twice per day after breakfast and before bedtime.
- Starting at the age of two, you can increase the amount of toothpaste your child uses to pea-size.
- Fluoride in toothpaste helps to prevent tooth decay. It should, however, be kept out of your child's reach and you should put it on his toothbrush to prevent him from swallowing too much.
- Your child's dentist will recommend how often your child needs to be seen based on his oral health. Typically he will be seen every six months for a check-up to prevent cavities and other dental issues.

