



Protecting your toddler from tooth decay

Children form habits very easily and at a very early age, so it's up to all of us to help them keep dentally fit.

We want them to grow up with healthy teeth and gums so guiding and educating them from a young age will help ensure a lifetime of good oral health. Here's a few tips on how to keep your little ones free from cavities:

- The first teeth usually start to appear at around six months and are all through by three years
- Dental caries (tooth decay) is a softening of the enamel which leads to holes in teeth
- Tooth decay can cause discomfort and distress to children
- There are many reasons for developing tooth decay so prevention is always better than treatment
- Diet plays an important part in preventing tooth decay, especially limiting the amount of sugary food and drinks to four times a day, at meals and having just one snack a day
- Water and milk are the only drinks that should be consumed between meals and snacks
- Undiluted fruit juices cause erosion of the dental enamel and they should always be diluted before drinking
- All drinks should be taken from a cup or glass, not a bottle
- Tooth brushing should start once the child's first teeth have appeared
- Toothpaste should always contain fluoride, even if the drinking water is fluoridated
- An easy way to brush a toddler's teeth is from behind
- If children need medicines they should always be sugar free. If none are available they should, if possible, be taken with their meals and not last thing at night



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