

3. Nutrition for Children

When your child eats or drinks sugars, the germs (bacteria) in your child's mouth mix with the sugars to make a mild acid. This acid attacks the hard outer layer of teeth (also called enamel). It can make holes (or cavities) in the teeth. The damage that sugars do depends on how much sugar goes into the mouth and how long it stays in the mouth. Any kind of sugar will mix with germs in the mouth. Natural sugars can have the same effect on teeth as white (or refined) sugar out of the bag!

Many healthy foods contain natural sugars. Milk contains natural sugar.

If you put your child to bed with a bottle of milk, the milk stays in the mouth for a long time. This may cause cavities. Unsweetened fruit juice may have no added sugar, but fruit juice has natural sugars in it. If your child is always sipping juice between meals, the teeth are being coated in sugars over and over again. Water is the best drink to have between meals.

Starchy foods, like teething biscuits, break down to make sugars. If these kinds of food stay in your child's mouth long enough, they will make the acid that can cause cavities. Your job is to clean your child's teeth, not to stop your child from having milk, juice, bread or noodles. Your child needs these foods to stay healthy.

Read the labels of the packaged food you buy. By law, every ingredient in packaged food is listed by weight. So if a sugar is listed first, you know that there is more sugar than anything else. These are sugars you can look for on labels: corn sweeteners; corn syrup; dextrose; fructose; glucose; honey; maple syrup; molasses and sucrose. Also, check to see if liquid medicines (such as cough syrup) have sugars. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to give you medicines that are sugar-free.

Snacks:

Growing children need and like snacks. Here are some smart ways to give snacks:

- Limit the number of times a day your child eats or drinks sugars. If your child sips juice or pop while playing, he or she will have sugars in the mouth over and over again. Water is the best drink to have between meals.

- Do not give your child sugar-rich foods that stay in the mouth for a long time like gum with sugar in it, suckers (or lollipops) and other hard candy. Stay away from soft, sticky sweets that get stuck in the mouth such as toffee, raisins and rolled-up fruit snacks or fruit leather.
- Keep good snacks handy where your child can get them. Have carrot sticks or cheese cubes on the bottom shelf of the fridge. Children like small things like small boxes of cereal, small fruits and vegetables, and small packs of nuts or seeds (provided they are safe for your child). Keep them in a low cupboard.
- To keep your child from asking for sweets, do not buy them. If they are not in the house, you can't give them out. If you do serve sweets, limit them to meals. When your child is eating a meal, there is more saliva in the mouth. This helps to wash away the sugars.

4. Your Child's First Visit

The Canadian Dental Association recommends the assessment of infants, by a dentist, within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth or by one year of age. The goal is to have your child visit the dentist before there is a problem with his or her teeth. In most cases, a dental exam every six months will let your child's dentist catch small problems early.

Here are 3 reasons to take your child for dental exams:

1. You can find out if the cleaning you do at home is working.
2. Your dentist can find problems right away and fix them.
3. Your child can learn that going to the dentist helps prevent problems.

If you have any questions or concerns never hesitate to ask your Dental Team!

Source:

http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral_health/cfyt/dental_care_children/

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CARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S TEETH

1. Cleaning Teeth

Young children are not able to clean their own teeth. As a parent, you must do it for them when they are very young and do it with them, as they get older.

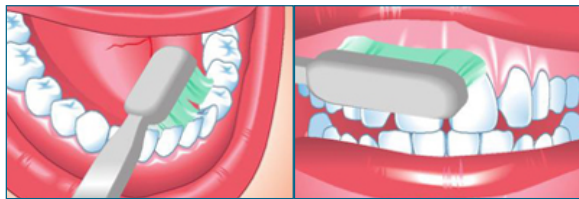
You should start cleaning your child's mouth even before your child has teeth. It gets both you and your child into the habit of keeping the mouth clean, and it gives baby (or primary) teeth a clean place to come into. The goal is to wipe all parts of the gums and teeth.

Here's how to do it:

- Lie your baby in a comfortable place.
- Make sure you can see into your baby's mouth.
- Use a soft baby brush or wrap your finger in a clean, damp washcloth. Then, brush or wipe you're your baby's gums and teeth.
- Do not use toothpaste until your child has teeth.

How to Brush

- Hold the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the teeth. Point the bristles to where the gums and teeth meet.
- Use gentle circles. Do not scrub. Clean every surface of every tooth. For the front teeth, use the "toe" or front part of the brush. The key word is gentle. You can hurt the gums by brushing too hard.



Toothbrushes

- The best kind of brush is soft, with rounded bristles. It should be the right size for your child's mouth. You will need to buy a new toothbrush at least every 3 or 4 months.
- Children can be hard on toothbrushes. If the bristles get bent or worn down, they will not do a good job, and may hurt your child's gums.

Toothpaste

- Make sure the toothpaste has fluoride. Check the box or tube for the symbol of the Canadian Dental Association. This symbol means the toothpaste has fluoride. Use only a bit of toothpaste and make sure your child spits it out.
- As excessive swallowing of toothpaste by young children may result in dental fluorosis, children under 6 years of age should be supervised during brushing and only use a small amount of toothpaste.
- Children under 3 years of age should have their teeth brushed by an adult. The use of fluoridated toothpaste in this age group is determined by the level of risk. Parents should consult a health professional to determine whether a child up to 3 years of age is at risk of developing tooth decay. If such a risk exists, the child's teeth should be brushed by an adult using a minimal amount (a portion the size of a grain of rice) of fluoridated toothpaste. Use of fluoridated toothpaste in a small amount has been determined to achieve a balance between the benefits of fluoride and the risk of developing fluorosis. If the child is not considered to be at risk, the teeth should be brushed by an adult using a toothbrush moistened only with water.
- Children from 3 to 6 years of age should be assisted by an adult in brushing their teeth. Only a small amount (a portion the size of a green pea) of fluoridated toothpaste should be used.

How to Floss

- Take a piece of floss about as long as your child's arm. Wrap it around your middle fingers, leaving about 2 inches between the hands. Use your index fingers to guide the floss between the teeth.
- Slide the floss between the teeth and wrap it into a "C" shape. It should wrap around the base of the tooth, where the tooth meets the gum.
- Wipe the tooth from bottom to top 2 or 3 times or more, until it is squeaky clean.
- Be sure you floss both sides of each tooth, and don't forget the backs of the last molars.
- Move to a new part of the floss as you move from tooth to tooth.

Should my child always brush right before bed?

Yes. If you don't get rid of the germs (bacteria) and sugars that cause cavities, they have all night to do their dirty work. Plus, when your child is asleep, he or she does not produce as much spit (or saliva). Saliva helps keep the mouth clean. So brushing at bedtime is very important.

2. Early Childhood Tooth Decay

- Once your child has teeth, he is susceptible to tooth decay. Mother's milk, formula, cow's milk and fruit juice all contain sugars.
- Babies may get early childhood tooth decay from going to bed with a bottle of milk, formula or juice. Unrestricted at-will breast-feeding at night may increase the risk of tooth decay, although the majority of breast-fed children do not experience this early childhood disease.
- It can happen to children up to age four. Once your child has teeth, lift his or her lips once a month and check the teeth. Look for dull white spots or lines on the teeth. These may be on the necks of the teeth next to the gums. Dark teeth are also a sign of tooth decay.
- If you see any signs, go to the dentist right away. Early childhood tooth decay must be treated quickly. If not, your child may have pain and infection.

If you give your child a bottle of milk, formula or juice at bedtime, stopping all at once will not be easy. Here are some tips:

- Put plain water in the bottle.
- If this is turned down, give your child a clean soother, a stuffed toy or a blanket.
- If your child cries, do not give up.
- Comfort him or her, and try again.

If this does not work, try watering down your child's bottle over a week or two, until there is only plain water left.