

Nutrition and Dental Caries

Having a healthy diet is important in all aspects of life. For your baby, poor nutrition leads to an increased risk of tooth decay. Tooth decay appears as white spots/lines on the front teeth. If not dealt with, these can turn into yellow-brown spots, which can eventually spread to the back of the teeth.



Breastfeeding provides your baby with many health benefits and has a minimal chance of tooth decay. You should try not to feed your baby fluoridated infant formula, as lots of fluoride is bad for your baby. When making the transition from breast/bottle to a cup, avoid using a sippy cup that contains a sugary drink because this promotes decay. Try to limit drinks to breast milk, formula, and water.

Around 6 months of age, your child can start eating solid foods. As a parent, you can help your child develop good eating habits. When your child first starts teething they can be introduced to sugary foods. However, you should avoid snacks that are high in sugar and limit the amount of sweets your child eats throughout the day.

Good snacks include:

- Cheese
- Dried meat sticks
- Plain milk (chocolate milk is okay, but white milk is better)
- Low sugar yogurt
- Veggies

Bad snacks include:

- Candy
- Cookies
- Cake
- Sweet drinks
- Dried fruit
- Gummy fruit snacks
- Breakfast bars

Around 12-24 months, baby teeth start to appear. Looking after your baby's teeth is important for good dental health. You should start cleaning your infant's gums before teeth have even appeared, and continue to help your child to brush their teeth up until they are 8 years old.

0-5 months: Cradle your baby in one arm, wrap a moist washcloth around the index finger of the other arm, and gently massage their gums.

6-18 months: Brush teeth with a baby's toothbrush (soft bristles) and plain water twice a day.

18 months-6 years: Only use a small amount (pea-size) of tooth paste and brush for about 2 minutes. Brush in a circular motion.

Your baby should have their first dental check-up during the first 6-12 months. This can help promote proper dental hygiene and prevent early childhood caries.