

Dental-Care Timeline

by Laura Spruce Wight

— Ages 5 & Up

- Dental sealants are most effective when applied after permanent molars come in at age 6 or older. (Highly effective in preventing cavities)
- Kids should be using mouth guards in contact sports. The need for mouth guards is often overlooked in sports like baseball, basketball, rollerblading and skateboarding. (The mouth guards available in sporting goods stores work just fine for most kids).
- If orthodontic work is needed, a child's dentist will make a referral between the ages of 7 – 12.

— Ages 1-4

- Stop using the bottle by 1 year – 1 ½ years old because constant exposure to sugars in milk and juice leads to increased risk of cavities. Continuing to breastfeed is fine.
- Stop the use of a pacifier or thumb-sucking by age 3 (or 4 if children seem to need more time) to prevent mouth distortion.
- Kids should brush twice a day with parental supervision during the evening brushing.
- Start seeing a dentist every six months (the most cavities in a person's lifetime occur between the ages of 3 – 10).

— Birth-12 Months

- Get the first dental check-up by a child's 1st birthday even if no teeth have appeared (or 6 months after the 1st tooth appears) to assess risk for dental decay.
- Find a Dentist who works well with children. (Ask your pediatrician for a recommendation or look at the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Web site.)
- The first tooth appears anywhere from 3 months – 12 months.
- Begin wiping teeth with a washcloth or soft toothbrush as soon as the 1st tooth appears. (Use of non-fluoridated children's toothpaste is fine or just use water.)

— Pregnancy

- Mom needs to take care of her teeth too! Cavities are an infectious disease and mom is usually the source of the bacteria, so pregnant moms and mothers of young children should see a dentist to take care of any untreated cavities so that bacteria isn't passed along to her infant once it is born.
- Take good care of yourself during pregnancy. Premature and low birth weight infants are at higher risk for tooth decay.



TOOTH CARE TIPS

Play a child's favorite song for 2 minutes and encourage brushing for the duration. (There is a toothbrush on the market called "Tooth Tunes" that does this too. There are also brushes that flash for two minutes.)

Floss first, then brush. (Try using the floss aids that look like dinosaurs, etc. to encourage kids.)

Use a rice sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste for kids age 2 (earlier if mom has tooth decay or child is otherwise at high risk for it.)

Use a pea sized amount of toothpaste for kid ages 3 and older or when your child can spit.

Parents should supervise the evening tooth brushing until the child can write in cursive (until age 8 or so).

If your child is less than cooperative, remember 30 seconds of brushing is easier than 30 minutes of dental work.

Start in a different area of the mouth each night so you aren't brushing one area well before your child gets weary.

Trade bottles for cups with sippy straws. Don't put kids to bed with either.

Have kids sit at a table or high chair for drinks rather than allowing them to walk around sipping on them.

Select a chewing gum with Xylitol as the sweetener. Studies have shown that this sweetener is actually instrumental in preventing tooth decay!

When it's time to give up the pacifier, try cutting the tip off of it and giving it to the child, or having the child "give" all her pacifiers to a younger cousin or friend. The "paci fairy" might also bring a big reward in exchange for rounded up pacifiers.

Avoid kids snacking on carbs all day long (fishy crackers, pretzels, juices) – think Atkins diet for the teeth!

Snacks like low-fat cheese, apples, and carrots help to neutralize acids and cleanse the teeth.

THANKS TO:

Dr. Chris Delecki – family dentist, *Odessa Brown Children's Clinic, Seattle*

Dr. Eve Rutherford – practices in *Snohomish County* and serves on the board of *Washington Dental Service Foundation*

Dr. Leland Shenfield – *Mill Creek Children's Dentistry, Mill Creek*

Oral Health Resources



ORGANIZATIONS

Washington Dental Service Foundation

<http://www.KidsOralHealth.org>

The Washington Dental Service Foundation is a non-profit funded by Washington Dental Service with the mission of preventing oral disease. The foundation's message emphasizes the importance of early intervention and the benefits of good nutrition and healthy eating.

The foundation promotes programs like the "Access to Baby & Child Dentistry (ABCD) Program" which is available in Seattle and the surrounding counties to children enrolled in the state Medicaid program. The program matches children with a certified dentist and strives to get all children oral screening by the age of one.

WSDF has also teamed up with Seattle Children's Hospital to operate the Smile Mobile, a mobile clinic that targets children in lower

income families on Medicaid or the uninsured.

"Cavity Free Kids," the foundation's oral health curriculum, is available to Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance programs and offers training and materials free of charge. www.cavityfreekids.org

Kids Health Organization

<http://kidshealth.org/>

Provides information about what to expect on a visit to the dentist, and other oral health related issues.

The Washington Oral Health Foundation

<http://www.wohfkidsconnect.com>

The Washington Oral Health Foundation is the non-profit charitable arm of the Washington State Dental Association. Its goal is to improve oral health for the people in our state through education and access to dental care.

Through free and subsidized education

programs offered to pre-schools, head start programs, and grade schools, the foundation teaches children to connect oral health to their overall health and understand that it can impact their entire body for the rest of their lives. The programs "put the mouth back in the body" and help kids to see the big picture about the most preventable disease in the world.

The foundation is affiliated with The Boys and Girls Club and works to set up long term dental care plans for children and has programs that allow children to interact with a dental team to put them at ease. They are also affiliated with the University of Washington School of Dentistry and connects clubs like Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCA's, etc. with dental students who speak the children about oral health.

Their website offers oral health games and activities for children.

VIDEO

"Making Healthy Smiles for a Lifetime!"

<http://www.seattlechildrens.org/videos/making-healthy-smiles-for-a-lifetime/>

A short video from Seattle Children's Hospital providing educational information for parents to prepare for their child's very first dental appointment. Parents will learn what to expect ►

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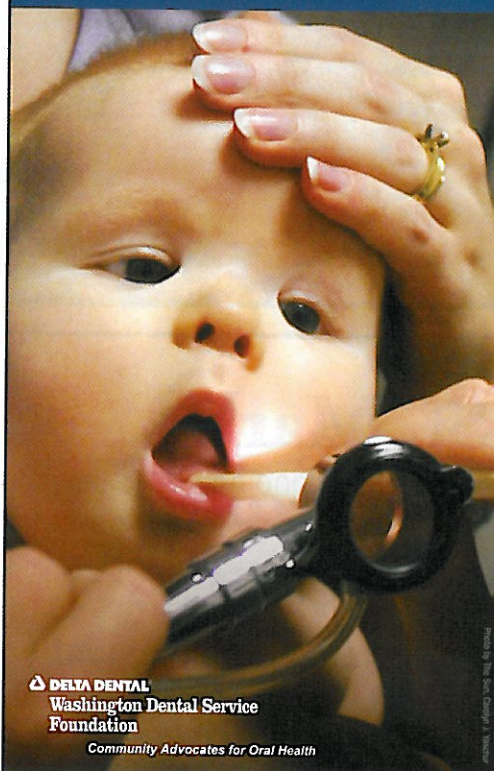


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Make sure your baby is healthy - in every way

Dental decay can be painful and affect your child's future health and learning.



Every child should
have an oral health
screening by age one.

Healthy baby teeth:

- Allow children to chew and eat properly
- Help children speak clearly
- Help guide adult teeth into place

Ask your dentist or physician
to screen your baby's teeth.

Preventing dental disease
helps your
baby stay healthy.

For tips on taking care of your baby's teeth,
visit KidsOralHealth.org

DELTA DENTAL
Washington Dental Service
Foundation

Community Advocates for Oral Health

Health Dental Timeline

at the appointment, how to care for their child's teeth and gums and how oral health is connected to overall health.

BOOKS FOR KIDS ABOUT TEETH

All About Teeth (Ages 4 – 8) *Mari C. Schuh* Simple text, photographs, and illustrations present information about teeth, including how to care for them properly.

Brush Your Teeth Please (Baby and pre-school) *Reader's Digest* What child can resist imitating a chimp brushing its teeth back and forth? Or a shark that flosses every day? Youngsters will have lots of fun learning about proper dental hygiene in this delightful pop-up book.

Do I Have to Go to the Dentist (Ages 4 – 9) *Pat Thomas and Lesley Harker* This good-humored story emphasizes the dentist's role as a friend and advisor who ensures that boys and girls have healthy teeth and attractive smiles.

Dr. De Soto (Spanish and English versions) (Ages 4 – 8) *William Steig* Doctor De Soto is a well-respected mouse-dentist who runs a successful practice with his wife (and able assistant) Mrs. De Soto.

Little Rabbit's Loose Tooth (Ages 4 – 8) *Lucy Bate* About the momentous loss of a first tooth by a rabbit girl.

Loose Tooth (Ages 4 – 8) *Lillian Hoban* Hoban's famous chimp Arthur once again helps readers face their worst fears; here, he has to pull his very loose tooth.

Meet Michael's Dentist (Ages 3 – 7/8) (*Fisher Price Little People Board Book*)

My Dentist, My Friend (Ages 4 – 9) *P. K. Hallinan* This reassuring book guides first-time patients step-by-step through a visit to the dentist's office.

Open Wide: Tooth School Inside (Ages 4 – 11) *Laurie Keller* A school day where all 32 teeth are in attendance and learn about anatomy, tooth care, and the tooth fairy makes an appearance.

Show Me Your Smile: A Visit to the Dentist – Dora (Ages 4 – 8) *Christine Ricci and Robert Roper* It's time for Dora's checkup at the dentist. Dora explores the dentist's office, gets her teeth cleaned, and more! She even gets a special treat for being such a good patient!

Snacks for Healthy Teeth (Ages 5 – 8) (available in Spanish and English) *Mari C. Schuh* Simple text, photographs, and illustrations present information healthy snacks for teeth, including how to care for them properly.

The Tooth Book (Ages 2 – 8) *Dr. Seuss* Rhyming text and illustrations briefly point out what animals have teeth, their uses, and how to care for them.

Those Icky Sticky Smelly Cavities (Bilingual) (Ages 4 – 12) *Judith Anne Rice and Julie Stricklin* Imaginative and fun, this resource was designed to show kids, through playful and colorful illustrations, the germs that cause cavities and how important tooth brushing is to good dental health.

Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Tales from Around the World (Ages 4 – 10) *Selby Beeler and G. Brian Karas* World myths and traditions about teeth.

Tooth Tales: From Around the World (Ages 4 – 8) *Marlene Targ Brill and Katya Krenina* Explores how different cultures have viewed losing teeth and how the idea of the Tooth Fairy originated. ●

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Look to the "Our Schools" section of *Seattle's Child* magazine and Web site for stories about the schools and education issues in our community.

