



TIPS FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

What causes tooth decay?

- Germs cause cavities.
- Germs can be spread from parents to infants and toddlers.
- Foods and drinks feed these germs.
- The germs make acids and cause cavities.
- Tooth decay can be stopped if it is caught early.

How do you prevent tooth decay?

- You are a role model for your child. Brush, floss and have regular check-ups.
- Fluoride can help prevent and heal early tooth decay.
- Your dentist or doctor may suggest these treatments for your child:
 - fluoride drops or tablets – if your water does not contain fluoride
 - fluoride varnish – painted on the smooth surfaces of teeth to heal early decay
 - sealants – liquid plastic painted on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth
- Choose tooth-healthy snacks such as cheese, fruits and vegetables. Avoid “grazing” – snacking or sipping on sweet liquids throughout the day.
- Drink lots of water after meals and snacks to help clean teeth.



Family Health Hotline a program of
1.800.322.2588
 711 (tty relay) • withinreachwa.org **WithinReach**

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance, nutrition and dental services for families, call 1-800-322-2588, or visit www.withinreach.org

DELTA DENTAL
**Washington Dental Service
 Foundation**

Community Advocates for Oral Health

Visit www.KidsOralHealth.org to learn more about baby teeth and how to protect your child’s oral health.



TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHILD’S BABY TEETH

Dental Care Basics for Children Birth to Six Years

DELTA DENTAL
**Washington Dental Service
 Foundation**

Community Advocates for Oral Health



Teeth start to come in around the age of 6 months. They help your baby chew food and speak clearly. And, they help shape your baby's face and guide adult teeth into place.



DENTAL CARE FOR BABIES

Teething

- Offer a cold, firm, safe teething object like a teething ring or slightly frozen washcloth.
- Rub the gums gently with your clean finger.



Cleaning and Brushing

- After teeth come in, gently clean teeth and gums with a small soft toothbrush or clean damp cloth and a rice-sized amount of toothpaste.

To Keep Teeth Healthy

- If you give your baby a bottle at bedtime or naps give only water. Other liquids can cause decay if left in your baby's mouth while sleeping.
- Ask your dentist or doctor about fluoride drops when your child is 6 months old.
- Make sure that your baby's mouth is checked by age one by a dentist or doctor. Take your baby in sooner if you notice a problem.



DENTAL CARE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Brushing

- Brush your child's teeth at least twice a day. Always brush at bedtime.
- Use a small soft toothbrush and a rice-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.
- Brush for at least 2 minutes, brushing every surface of every tooth and the tongue.
- Replace the toothbrush every 3 to 4 months.

To Keep Teeth Healthy

- Lift your child's lip to get a good look at all of the teeth. If you see white or brown spots on your child's teeth, contact your dentist or doctor.
- When you think your child is ready, let her practice brushing her own teeth – around age 4 or 5. Still brush your child's teeth once daily until she is about 6 to 8 years old.
- Take your child for a dental check-up at least once a year.