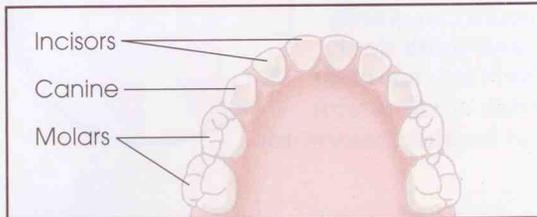
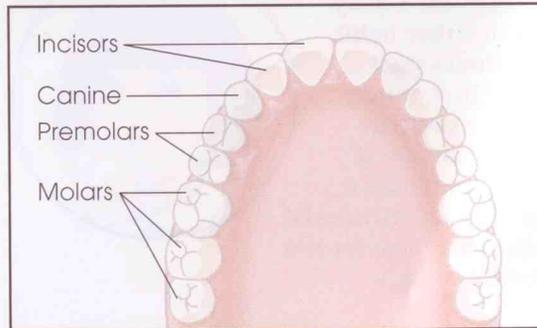


The Tooth Chart

A child's first teeth are called **primary** (baby) teeth. These teeth start to **erupt** (come in) between 4 and 18 months of age. In most children, all baby teeth are in place by age 3. At age 6 or 7, baby teeth begin to fall out. They are replaced by **permanent** (adult) teeth. Most adult teeth are in place by the time the child is in his or her early teens.



Primary teeth are present deep in the gums at birth. Taking good care of them helps the adult teeth develop properly.



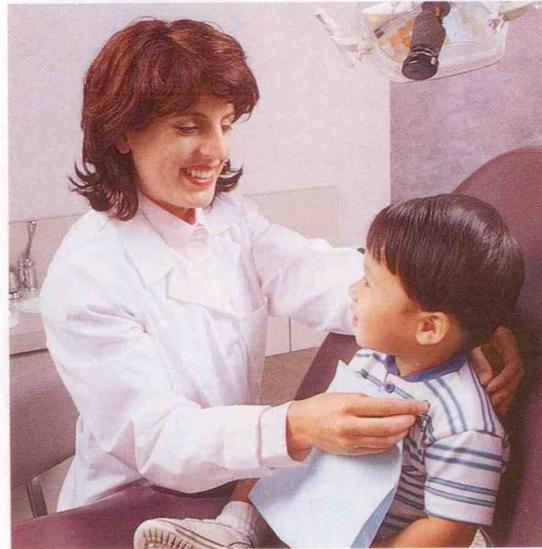
Permanent teeth are the ones the child will have for the rest of his or her life.

Coping with Teething

The time when the baby teeth are coming in is called **teething**. During teething, your baby may be grouchy. He or she may drool more than usual and may chew on things to help feel better. Cold teething rings, pacifiers, and numbing creams can help make teething easier for your baby.

Visiting the Dentist

Your child's first dental visit should be when the first tooth erupts, or by age 1. Before this first checkup, a "practice" visit can be arranged to help your child get used to the dental office. A checkup and cleaning is then needed about twice a year.



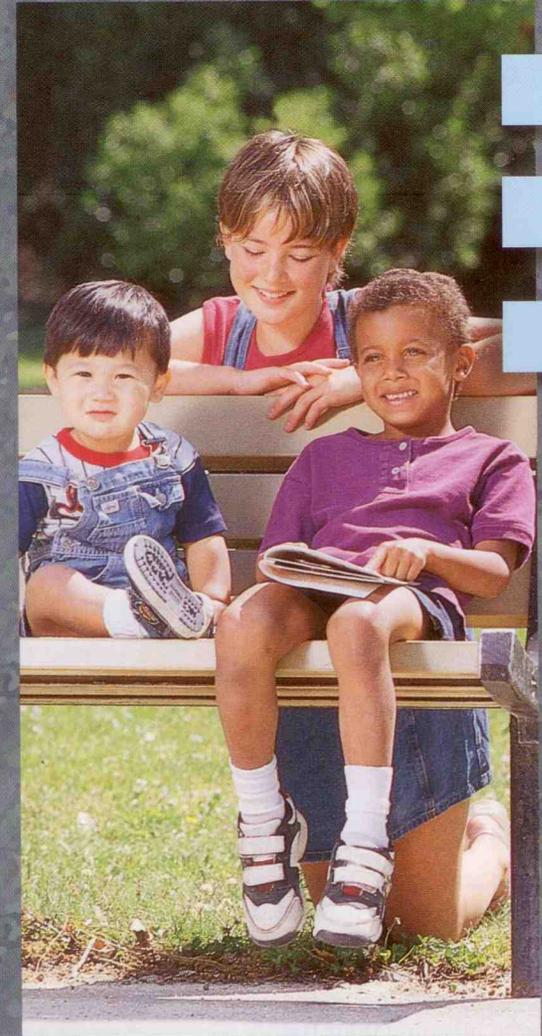
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Your Child's Teeth



*Dental Care As
Your Child Grows*

Your Child's Teeth

It's never too early for good dental care. With good oral healthcare, your child can grow up cavity-free. Start by caring for your baby's teeth. As he or she grows, teach your child the best possible tooth care. And don't forget that healthy teeth and gums require regular visits to the dentist.

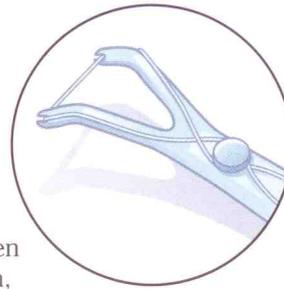


Let's Talk About Brushing

Food and bacteria form a sticky substance on teeth called **plaque**. Bacteria in the plaque make acid that eats away the tooth's **enamel** (hard coating). This causes tooth decay. Brushing keeps plaque from forming. Begin cleaning your baby's teeth and gums as soon as the first tooth appears. At first, use water and a piece of cotton gauze. As more teeth come in, use a small toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. When the child is old enough to brush on his or her own, watch to be sure it's done right.

Don't Forget Flossing

Flossing removes bacteria and plaque from between the teeth and under the gums. Floss your child's teeth daily. When the child is old enough, a floss holder can help him or her floss.



A floss holder can make flossing easier.

What About Fluoride?

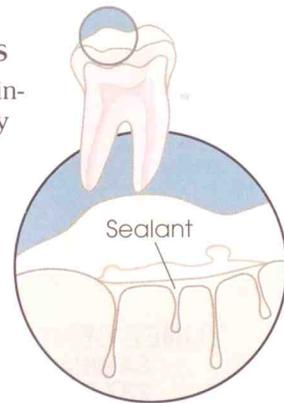
Fluoride makes tooth enamel stronger. This helps prevent cavities. Find out if your community's water has fluoride added to it. If not, ask your dentist whether your child should be given fluoride supplements. Your dentist may also apply fluoride to your child's adult teeth at regular checkups.



Fluoride helps prevent cavities.

Help from Sealants

Sealants are a safe, painless, and low-cost way to help protect your child's back teeth from decay. A thin plastic coating is bonded to the chewing surfaces of the molars and premolars. The sealant forms a hard shield that keeps food and bacteria from getting into the tiny grooves on the surface of the teeth.



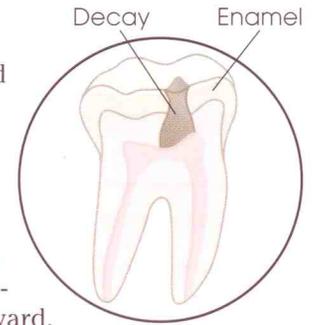
Sealants fill grooves to keep food and bacteria out.

Problems to Watch For

Problems with either the baby or adult teeth can harm your child's growing smile. So watch for signs of decay. And avoid things that may harm your child's teeth.

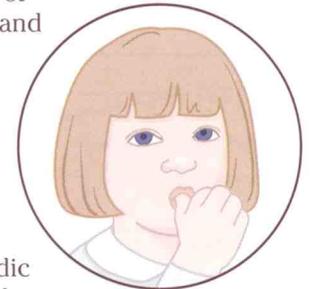
Tooth Decay

Never let your child sleep with a bottle. Bottle liquids (even milk) that sit in the mouth can quickly cause tooth decay. Don't let your child drink or snack without brushing afterward.



Thumb Sucking and Pacifiers

Sucking on a thumb or pacifier is common and normal for a baby. But if either habit continues past age 3 or 4, it may lead to tooth or jaw problems. If your child uses a pacifier, an orthopedic pacifier is best for the teeth and jaws.



When to Call the Dentist

- Starting around age 1, your child should have regular dental checkups every 6 months.
- Consult with your dentist if baby or adult teeth are crooked or fail to come in.
- Call the dentist if you notice brown or black spots on your child's teeth.
- If an adult tooth is loose, call your dentist. If a tooth is knocked out, get emergency dental care. Don't wash the tooth. Put it in milk until it can be put back in place.