

Preventing Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle.

If your baby cries for the bottle, fill it with plain water. Water does not harm the teeth. **Never prop** a bottle while your baby is sleeping.

Don't allow your baby to walk around with a bottle or sippy cup throughout the day. Try to use a pacifier.

At mealtime, don't share your fork or spoon with your baby. This passes bacteria from your mouth to your baby's mouth and can transfer cavity causing bacteria to enter your baby's mouth. This can lead to dental problems.

Wean your baby from a bottle to a cup (not a sippy cup) by 10-12 months old:

- Drinking from a cup cuts down on the amount of time that juice or milk is in contact with the teeth. Therefore, you are cutting down on the chances of tooth decay.
- You may need to help your baby hold the cup.

Clean your baby's mouth at least once a day:

- Use a wet, clean washcloth (no toothpaste until age two).
- Wash inside the lips, cheeks, and all around the tongue, the roof of the mouth and upper and lower gums.

Starting at 18 months, help your child use a toothbrush twice a day using circular motions. Use only water until age two, then use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.

Make sure your baby gets enough fluoride from fluoride drops or fluoridated water. Consult your doctor or dentist about this.

Set a good example. Brush and floss your own teeth every day and visit a dentist every 6 months.

Questions???

Call Smile Keepers Coordinator
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Baby Bottle Tooth Decay



What is Baby Bottle Tooth Decay?

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay is tooth decay that occurs in babies and young children. It is caused by sugars contained in formula, cow's milk, fruit juice, sweetened drinks and even breast milk.

When these liquids stay on the teeth for long periods of time, the sugars will cause the teeth to weaken and the decay process may begin.

This happens most often when babies:

- Carry a bottle or sippy cup around with them and sip from it throughout the day
- Are allowed to suck from a bottle while they are sleeping

Why are baby teeth important?

It is important to care for your baby's teeth because they help your little ones with:

- Good speaking
- Good eating habits, and
- Reserving space for permanent teeth

How do I keep my baby's teeth healthy?

- Clean them at least once a day(see back)
- Have your baby's first dental visit no later than one year of age.
- Begin fluoride drops at 6 months of age. Consult your health care provider or family dentist.

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