



Smart Snacking

Eating a lot of sugary snacks may give your child cavities. Each time your child eats sugar, germs in the mouth mix with the sugar to make acid. The acid hurts the teeth over time by eating away at the teeth.

- Give your child snacks that are low in sugar - vegetables, cheese or pretzels - and limit snacks between meals.
- Limit eating soft, sticky sweets (like chewy candy or raisins) that get on and in between the teeth. Sticky foods stay in the mouth longer and the acid can decay teeth.
- Avoid sugary foods like gum, hard candies and suckers that stay in the mouth for a long time.
- Brush teeth after snacking. Have your child rinse his or her mouth if brushing is not an option. Saliva or water in the mouth can help reduce the damage sugar can cause to the teeth.

* may be covered by MassHealth through your pharmacy benefit

MassHealth members that need help finding a dentist please contact:

1-800-207-5019,
TTY 1-800-466-7566

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A QUICK GUIDE TO YOUR CHILD'S ORAL HEALTH





THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR YOUNG CHILD'S ORAL HEALTH

At DentaQuest, we know it's important to encourage good oral health at an early age. That is why we put together this guide for you. While you take care of your children in every other way, let us help you with their oral health.

0-6 Months

Baby teeth usually come in at about 6 months. Baby teeth hold space for adult teeth and are needed for children to chew their food. It is important to help your baby form healthy teeth. Healthy baby teeth are all one color. If you see spots or stains on any teeth, take your baby to a dentist.

- Use a washcloth with a little water to clean your baby's gums and teeth twice a day.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle. Try a blanket, warm bath or rocking them to sleep.
- Talk to a dentist about teething and fluoride drops*. Fluoride helps make teeth strong.

7-11 Months

Lower front teeth will show at about 8 months. Upper front teeth show at about 10 months. As your baby starts to eat soft foods, include healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. In addition,

- Limit or water down juices. Get your baby used to drinking water.
- Teach them to use a cup when 7 months old.
- Continue cleaning their teeth twice a day with a washcloth or a soft baby toothbrush.

12-24 Months

Take your child to the dentist at age one or when first tooth comes in. Your child can visit the dentist as early as six months or when their first tooth comes and should start regular six month visits by age one (12 months).

First molars and eye teeth come in between 16 and 20 months. Enamel is the coating on permanent teeth. Enamel is forming during these months. Strong enamel helps prevent cavities. Healthy foods make enamel strong. Be sure to feed your child from the five major food groups:

1. Breads, cereals and other grains
2. Fruits
3. Vegetables
4. Meat, chicken, fish, beans, eggs
5. Milk, cheese, yogurt

You can use a smear or the size of a grain of rice of fluoride toothpaste on your child's teeth now. Brush them two times a day. Take your child to the dentist to be checked for early cavities.

25-36 Months

Second molars, the last of the baby teeth, come in now.

- Take your child to the dentist every six months for a check-up. Talk to the dentist about fluoride drops*.
- Teach your child how to brush their own teeth. Help them while they do it twice a day.
- Replace your child's toothbrush every 2-3 months or when bristles are frayed.
- Continue to feed your child healthy foods.

Fluoride For a Healthy Mouth

- Fluoride is a mineral that makes your child's tooth enamel harder and slows the growth of germs, which causes cavities.
- It is found naturally in some of the foods your child eats (fish, grape juice, green leafy vegetables).

Fluoride has been added to the public water supplies in many towns, and most toothpastes contain fluoride. Talk to your dentist to see if your child may need more fluoride. They can give you fluoride drops* to help protect your child's teeth against decay.

* may be covered by MassHealth through your pharmacy benefit