

BARTH FAMILY DENTISTRY, PSC
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Dental Care For Your Baby

When should your baby have his/her first dental visit?

The first dental visit should be by the baby 1st birthday or before if you suspect a problem. The reason to see a dentist so early is to stop problems before they begin. The biggest dental problem that young children have is “Baby Bottle Caries”.

Baby Bottle Caries (Baby Bottle Tooth Decay)

- * It is when a baby is laid down with milk, juice or acid/sugary drinks and this fluid lays on the teeth and causes several teeth in the baby’s mouth to decay very fast.
- * Children should be weaned from the bottle between 12 to 14 months and encouraged to drink out of children cups by his/her first birthday.
- * **Avoid** filling any bottle with sugary drinks at any time during the day or night (No soft drinks or juices)
- * **Never** give a pacifier dipped milk or any sweet/sugary liquids.
- * **Never** allow a child to fall asleep with a bottle that contains, milk, juice or sugary drink/soft drinks.
- * **Only** lay a child down to sleep with bottle filled with **water formulated with fluoride** (Swallowing water with fluoride is healthy for the children developing permanent teeth and baby teeth due to the fluoride concentration is mixed in water at the proper concentration to encourage but not damage the child’s teeth).

Thumb or Finger Sucking:

Thumb sucking is perfectly normal for infants but should be stopped completely by age 2. If the child doesn’t stop after age 3, then this could cause, teeth to become crowded, crooked teeth, open bite, and other bite and alignment problems.

Cleaning Your Baby’s Mouth and Teeth:

The sooner the better! Start at birth, clean the child’s gums with a soft infant toothbrush or soft cloth and water (NO TOOTHPASTE). Do not give a child toothpaste until the child can spit the toothpaste out (around age 2 or 3). Or use toothpaste that doesn’t contain Fluoride until they can spit it out. Swallowing of toothpaste which contains Fluoride (in high concentrations) while permanent teeth are developing can cause damage to the permanent teeth. You can start flossing when all baby teeth have erupted, around age 2 to 3.

Teething:

From 6 months to 3 year old, your child may have sore gums when the teeth erupt. Many children like a clean teething ring, cool spoon or cold wet washcloth to chew on. Avoid teething rings with fluid in them (if the fluid filled rings break open, not only can they choke on it but bacteria that has grown in the fluid can enter the child’s mouth). All baby teeth should be erupted by 2 ½ years of age. You can expect permanent teeth to start erupting and to start losing baby teeth at 6 years of age.

Why Baby Teeth Are Important:

Baby teeth are important to maintain the space in the jaw for the adult teeth to come in. If a baby tooth is lost too early, the teeth adjacent may drift into the empty space and not allow the permanent tooth below to erupt properly causing crook or crowded teeth. Your dentist may place a “space maintainer appliance” to prevent the drifting of baby teeth. Healthy baby teeth also allow the child to eat, speak and develop normally. Research has shown that children with dental problem learn slower due to the fact that they cannot concentrate in school because they are in pain. So have your child visit their dentist every 6 months for a check-up.