

ORAL HEALTH

**Prevent Tooth Decay:** Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle at night or at nap time. (If you do put your baby to bed with a bottle, fill it only with water.) Milk, formula, juices and other sweet drinks, such as soda, all have sugar in them. Sucking on a bottle filled with liquids that have sugar in them can cause tooth decay. During the day, do not give your baby a bottle filled with sweet drinks to use like a pacifier. If your baby uses a pacifier, do not dip it in anything sweet like sugar or honey. Near his first birthday, you should teach your child to drink from a cup instead of a bottle

**Check and Clean Your Baby’s Teeth:** Healthy teeth should be all one color. If you see spots or stains on the teeth, take your baby to your dentist. Clean your child’s teeth as soon as they come in, using a clean, soft cloth or a baby’s toothbrush and plain water. Clean the teeth at least twice a day. It’s best to clean them right after breakfast and before bedtime. At about age 2, most of your child’s teeth will be in. Once your child can spit and not swallow the toothpaste (usually around ages 2 to 3), begin using fluoride toothpaste. Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste to limit the amount she can accidentally swallow. As your child gets older let her use her own toothbrush. It is best if you put the toothpaste on the toothbrush until your child is about age 6. Until children are 7 or 8 years old, you will need to help them brush. Try brushing their teeth first and then letting them finish. Be sure that you spread the toothpaste into the bristles of the brush and use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste