

Growing up cavity-free results from making critical decisions early in infancy regarding feeding patterns, diet and snacking behaviours, fluoride management and tooth cleaning routines.

Infant Oral Health Tips

- Establish a **'tooth brushing routine'** as soon as teeth erupt and stick to it every day. Brush after the first feeding of the day and after the last feeding before bed in the evening.
- Try laying your child on a surface like a **change table or counter** that allows you to get close to the mouth.
- Slide your free hand's index finger between the teeth and the lip to let you **see where you're brushing**.
- You may need to **gently 'wrap' your child in a towel** to keep their arms from interfering.
- Use a **soft-bristled toothbrush with a small pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste**, then push the toothpaste into the bristles so your child doesn't lick it off.
- Give your infant **praise** for helping so well.
- **Dental flossers** are a useful and easy way to introduce flossing. Remember you're establishing a routine that they'll keep for the rest of their life.
- **Distract your infant** by singing songs and talking to them, but above all, be gentle and take your time.
- **Don't get frustrated!** Remember, this is not punishment for you or your child.
- Sticking to your toothbrushing routine will only make it easier for your child to see it as a **normal and healthy part of life**.
- **Avoid frequent night-time feeding** (including breast-feeding) after the first baby tooth erupts.
- Bottle-fed infants **should not be put to sleep with the bottle**.
- Try to **wean child from the breast or bottle by 12 to 14 months of age** (to discourage using this to 'soothe' a child).
- Reduce your child's sugar consumption frequency.
- Limit your child's daily **fruit juice** intake to 4-6 oz. (avoid giving pop or powdered drinks).
- Children older than 6 months should be given **fluoride** every day. Use fluoride toothpaste twice per day.

