

Smile Starters

General Dentistry for Youth

first tooth through age 20



Smile Starters Program Baby, Infants & Toddlers Education Program

Pregnancy and Your Oral Health “What’s good for you is good for your baby”

- Babies begin to grow teeth between the 3rd & 6th month of pregnancy.
- Mothers with untreated cavities pass tooth decay germs to their baby.
- Eating healthy foods during pregnancy is important to your baby’s future dental health.
- Mothers should brush and floss regularly and see their dentist twice per year to avoid passing tooth decay on to their child.

Baby Your Baby’s Teeth

- Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease.
- Shortly after birth, wipe your new baby’s gums with a clean damp wash cloth.
- Clean the teeth at least twice a day, when your child wakes in the morning and right before bedtime are best.
- When the first teeth come in (6 to 10 months) use a small soft bristle brush to clean your baby’s teeth, use a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste. At about age 4 use a pea size drop of fluoride toothpaste.
- During teething soothe your baby with a cold water filled teething ring or a cold damp wash cloth. Avoid giving your baby teething biscuits and numbing gels.
- Feed your baby healthy food such as fruits and vegetables instead of candy and cookies.
- Never put your baby to bed with a bottle, anything but water at bedtime can cause tooth decay.
- If your baby uses a pacifier, do not dip it in anything sweet like sugar or honey.
- Encourage your child to drink from a cup near their first birthday.
- Regular visits to the dentist should begin by their first birthday.



Toddlers: The Dentist and Your Child

- Oral health screening should occur in the first year of life.
- Parents may be present during an infant’s examination so the dentist can point out any areas of concern.
- Early trips to the dentist help ease a child’s apprehension during future check ups.
- Most children stop thumb sucking by age 2, but if prolonged can create crowded, crooked teeth or bite problems. Dentists can suggest ways to address a prolonged thumb sucking habit.
- Limit frequency of meals & snacking to 4 times per day. Feed your child healthy food such as fruits and vegetables instead of candy and cookies.
- Always supervise young children while brushing. Teach children to spit out rather than swallow toothpaste.
- Fluoride varnish is a great way to prevent tooth decay. Fluoride varnish works by making teeth stronger and helping prevent cavities.
- Children who primarily drink bottled water may not be getting the fluoride they need. Check with your child’s dentist to see if fluoride supplements are necessary.

This information is provided by Smile Starters Dental and the U.S. Department of Health, Human Services National Institutes of Health and North Carolina Dept. of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health. Smile Starters provides general dentistry and follows the standards set by the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. **Rafael Rivera, Jr., DDS, PLLC**

