



“Get It Done In Year One”

Dental Care is Crucial During the First Year of Life

- Proper care for baby teeth is imperative as they serve several critical functions, including:
 - Fostering good nutrition by permitting proper chewing
 - Aiding speech development
 - Helping proper development of permanent teeth by saving space for them
- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), American Dental Association (ADA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics all recommend a dental visit for children by age one.
- Baby teeth are vulnerable to tooth decay from their very first appearance, on average between the ages of six and 12 months.
- The associative pain of tooth decay can prevent a child from eating correctly, impacting overall health and development. Additionally, undetected and untreated tooth decay can lead to infection, loss of teeth and expensive and mostly preventable emergency and restorative interventions.
- A scientific paper in the journal *Pediatric Dentistry* revealed that children who wait to have their first dental visit until age two or three are more likely to require restorative and emergency visits.

Benefits of the Year One Dental Visit

- **1 + 1 = ZERO.** ONE dental visit when there's ONE tooth can equal ZERO cavities.
- Visiting a pediatric dentist by the time the first baby tooth appears enables the child to begin a lifelong preventive dental care program to minimize tooth decay and cavities.
- Pediatric dentists can detect early tooth decay, provide parents with information on proper oral and facial development, determine fluoride needs and more.
- The year one dental visit can actually save money. A study in the journal *Pediatrics* showed that children who have their first dental visit before age one have 40 percent lower dental costs in their first five years than children who do not, due to the cost of dental and medical procedures that may be necessary as a result of poor oral health.

Recommended At-home Dental Care During Year One

Even before baby teeth appear, infants need proper oral care and fluoride supplements to help developing teeth grow strong and avoid early childhood caries.

- Parents should clean infant mouths and gums regularly with a soft infant toothbrush or cloth and water.
- Children older than six months need fluoride supplements if their drinking water does not contain enough fluoride. Fluoride supplementation in infants has been shown to reduce tooth decay by as much as 50 percent.
- Infants and young children have other unique caries-risk factors including development of dietary habits and childhood food preferences. Breast-feeding at will should be avoided after the first primary tooth begins to erupt and other dietary carbohydrates are introduced.
- Parents should be encouraged to have infants drink from a cup as they approach their first birthday. Infants should be weaned from the bottle by 12-14 months of age.
- Baby teeth should be brushed at least twice a day with an aged-appropriate sized toothbrush using a “smear” of fluoridated toothpaste.