Did You Know?

- Tooth problems are more prevalent in children who:
  - were born prematurely
  - have a low birth weight
  - come from lower income families
- Mothers’ nutrition during pregnancy can influence the dental growth and development of the baby.
- You should see your dentist during your first trimester of pregnancy.
- Cavities are prevented by brushing away any leftover food on the teeth and gums.
- You must replace your child’s toothbrush every 6 months and after they are sick.
- By the time your infant is 6 months old, 2 to 4 teeth may have grown in.
- Swallowing fluoride toothpaste can upset your child’s stomach. Teach and encourage kids to rinse and spit.
- Once your child is able to spit out the toothpaste instead of swallowing (around 2 years of age), they may begin to use fluoride toothpaste. A rice-sized amount of toothpaste is enough.
- Do you have well water? Talk to your dentist. You may need extra fluoride.

Resources

- Florida Dental Association Project: Dentists Care. (850) 681-3629 ext. 304.
- Ohio Dental Association: http://www.oha.org
- Nisonger Center I/DD Dental Program: http://www.nisonger.osu.edu/dental. (614) 292-3160
- Prenatal Dental Care: http://www.dentalgentlecare.com/pregdentcaretips
- Dental Care for Your Baby: http://www.aapd.org/publications/brochures/babycare.asp

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Infant Well-Being

What is Oral Hygiene?

Oral hygiene involves keeping your mouth healthy through simple steps such as:

- Brushing THOROUGHLY twice a day
- Flossing daily
- Seeing a dentist regularly

Why is Oral Hygiene Important?

Oral hygiene helps prevent tooth decay in infants. Decay can cause pain for a baby and lead to more problems later. Baby teeth help children make sounds properly, eat, hold space for permanent teeth and show off those smiles. In short, healthy teeth are important for healthy development!

What Can I Do?

During Pregnancy:
1. Eat healthy foods and take vitamins.
2. Limit sugar intake.
3. Brush and floss daily.

With Baby:
1. Avoid letting your baby fall asleep with a bottle or at the breast.
2. Limit your baby’s sugar intake. Sugar leads to tooth decay.
3. Clean your baby’s teeth with a baby’s toothbrush or a soft cloth and water 2-3 times a day (no fluoride until 2 years old).
4. Be a healthy role model! Let your baby watch you brush and floss.
5. Have your baby seen by a dentist by their first birthday or 6 months after their first tooth comes in.

What Happens if I Don’t?

- By the age of 6, 56% of U.S. children have cavities, which look like small brown holes in the tooth.
- When children have serious tooth and gum problems, it can make it hard or painful for them to eat and speak.
- Oral health problems can cause social, behavior, and learning problems for kids.
- Cavities and gum disease can cause pain and early tooth loss.
- If infants are given milk at nap or bedtime, the fluid can pool around the teeth and cause cavities.
- Remember, some of the baby teeth stay in until a child is about 13 years old.

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