

# 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>



Nisonger Center

### Information provided by:

Florida Center for Inclusive Communities at University of South Florida, and Nisonger Center at The Ohio State University, both University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

### Please Cite this Document as:

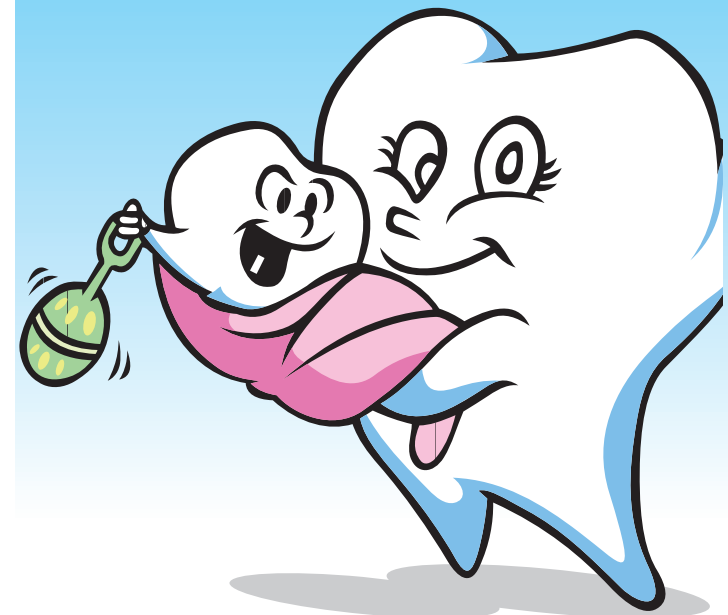
Vaughn, B.J., Brace, H., & Havercamp, S.M. (2008). For The Mouth of Babes: The Importance of Early Oral Hygiene. Florida Center for Inclusive Communities, <http://fifcic.org>.

Development of this material was supported by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (#90-DD-0592, Fox and Kincaid) and the William Greenville Pace Medical Research Fund of The Columbus Foundation

For more information or to print additional copies visit

# For the Mouths of Babes:

## The Importance of Early Oral Hygiene



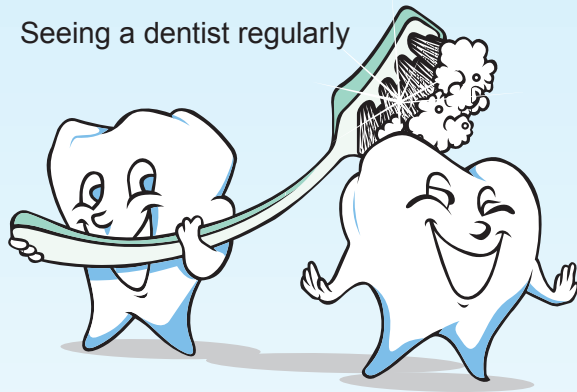
**Be Healthy Information Program**  
for Children and Adults with Disabilities

# 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 to 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!**

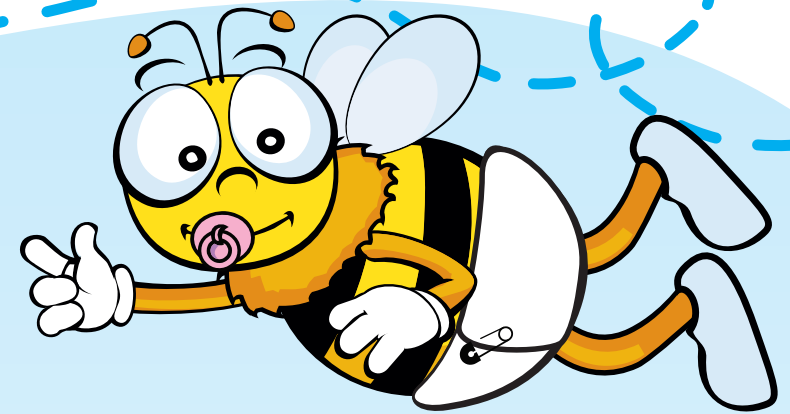
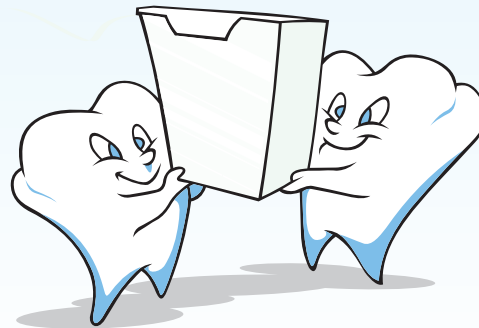
## What Can I Do?

### 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.

