

Early childhood  
**cavities prevention** for  
your baby and toddler



A wellness publication prepared for members of  
InterCommunity Health Network CCO

**OUR MEMBERS. OUR NEIGHBORS.**

# InterCommunity Health Network CCO

2300 Walnut Blvd., Corvallis

## While you are pregnant

During your pregnancy, you are building the foundation for your child's healthy teeth.

The first stage of tooth development begins in the fetus (growing baby) at about six weeks. Good dental care before and during pregnancy is important.

If your teeth are healthy, it is more likely your child's teeth will be healthy.

Dental cleanings and annual exams during pregnancy are safe and recommended.



## Newborn baby



Clean your baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth every day.

Do not put objects such as spoons from your mouth into your baby's mouth. Bacteria that causes cavities can be spread this way.

## Six months old



Usually around six months of age, a child's two bottom front teeth begin to come in.

Check your baby's teeth for white or brown spots at least once a month. These spots could be the start of cavities.

Clean each tooth with a damp washcloth every day. This removes the bacteria that causes cavities.

Start giving fluoride drops to your baby if your health care provider recommends it. Fluoride can help prevent cavities.

## One to two years old



Most of your toddler's primary (baby) teeth will come in between their first and second birthday.

Take your toddler to a dentist for regular checkups at least once or twice a year. Fluoride treatments may be put on your toddler's teeth to protect them from cavities.

Brush your toddler's teeth at least once a day using a pea-sized amount of non-flouride toothpaste. This removes the bacteria that causes cavities.

By two and a half years old, your child should have all 20 of their primary (baby) teeth.

## Three years old



Healthy primary teeth allow children to eat well, talk properly and feel good when they smile.

Teach your child how to brush and floss by themselves, but make sure to double check their brushing.

Your child's permanent teeth are still growing under their gums.

# CAVITY PREVENTION

## How parents can help prevent early childhood dental cavities

- Do not prop a bottle in the crib or put your baby to bed with a bottle. Try comforting your child with a pacifier, favorite toy or blanket instead.
- Clean your child's teeth every day.
- Check your child's teeth every month for any white or brown spots that could be the start of cavities.
- Your child's first visit to the dentist should be made by the first birthday or six months after the first tooth appears.
- Take your child to the dentist whenever you think there is a dental problem.
- Ask your child's dentist about fluoride treatments and dental sealants, which can protect your child's teeth from cavities.



## Toddler snacks

### Say "YES" to these snacks:

- Milk
- Water
- Vegetables
- Meat cubes
- Toast strips
- Tofu
- Eggs
- Fruits
- Yogurt
- Pretzels
- Cottage cheese
- String cheese

### Say "NO" to these snacks:

- ❌ Pop / soda
- ❌ Kool-aid
- ❌ Pop tarts
- ❌ Candy
- ❌ Cakes
- ❌ Jellies / Jams
- ❌ Donuts
- ❌ Chips
- ❌ Chocolate
- ❌ Gum
- ❌ Cookies

Too much sugar may cause cavities. The bacteria in your mouth uses sugar to make acid. This acid can eat away at the teeth and cause cavities.

Honey, molasses, brown sugar and corn syrup are just as harmful to teeth as sugar.

# QUESTIONS AT THEIR CHECK-UP

These are important questions you may want to talk about with your child's health care provider or dentist.

Q: When does my child need fluoride supplements?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Q: When should my child use toothpaste with fluoride in it?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Q: What types of problems can happen if my child takes a bottle to bed?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Q: What if my child complains of mouth pain?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Q: How can I teach my child the right way to brush their teeth?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Q: How can I protect my child from cavities?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Below are resources on mouth care for children.

## RESOURCES

### **American Academy of Pediatrics**

Dedicated to the health of all children

[www2.aap.org/oralhealth](http://www2.aap.org/oralhealth)

1-847-434-4779

### **Oregon Department of Human Services**

[www.public.health.oregon.gov](http://www.public.health.oregon.gov)

On left-hand side, click on "Prevention and Wellness"

Next, click on "Oral Health."

Then, click on "Care and Prevention."

### **Mouth Healthy –**

### **American Dental Association**

America's Leading Advocate for Oral Health

[www.mouthhealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org)

### **InterCommunity Health Network CCO**

### **Customer Service**

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