



# Your Child's Teeth

A healthy mouth is important to your child's overall health



## Baby teeth are very important

- The baby teeth start to erupt when a child is about six months old.
- Baby teeth are also called “primary” teeth and help adult teeth come in straight.
- Baby teeth help your child eat and speak, and are important for overall health. They fall out between the ages of five and 12.

## Healthy food builds healthy teeth

- A well-balanced diet is important for the development of healthy teeth.
- Cheese, yogurt and milk contain calcium that makes teeth strong and can help prevent cavities.

## Feeding your baby/toddler

- Never put your baby or toddler to bed with a bottle or a sippy cup. Juice, milk, and formula all contain sugar. They can cause tooth decay when left on the teeth too long.
- After 12 months, your toddler no longer needs a bottle.
- Never allow your toddler to sip all day on drinks other than water.

## Reduce your child's sugar intake

- Germs in the mouth called “bacteria” feed on sugar from foods to make an acid that harms teeth.
- Avoid fizzy drinks, fruit drinks, and 100% fruit juices, as they contain sugar and acids that cause tooth decay.
- Avoid juice and sugary drinks or snacks between meals.
- Fresh or unsweetened canned fruits are healthy snacks, as are whole grain crackers and bread.



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## Cleaning your child's teeth

- Clean your baby's mouth and teeth after each feeding.
- Before the baby has any teeth, the gums should be wiped with a clean, soft, wet cloth.
- Brushing should begin as soon as the first tooth appears so that your child will get used to brushing. Use a soft toothbrush.
- Brushing should follow meals and snacks and sweetened medications.
- For children under age 3, brush your child's teeth with a toothbrush and water. If a health care professional tells you that your child has a higher chance of tooth decay, use a small amount of fluoridated toothpaste – the size of a grain of rice.
- For children age 3 and older, use a green-pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste.
- Once the sides of the baby teeth touch each other, flossing should take place at least once a day.
- Watch for changes in colour, lines or spots on your child's teeth as these may be signs of a problem.

## Visit the dentist

- A child should visit a dental office by the age of one year, or when the first tooth appears.



Thank you to the New Brunswick Dental Society.