

LIFETIME SMILES BEGIN EARLY



TIPS FOR HEALTHY TEETH 12 MONTHS TO 36 MONTHS

Baby teeth are important. Tooth decay in baby teeth can be painful and can cause health problems like infections. A clean and germ-free mouth is a healthy place for teeth to grow.

- * **Brush your child's teeth daily.** Brush your child's teeth twice a day. Around age 2, begin brushing with a small smear of fluoride toothpaste on a baby- or child-sized soft bristled toothbrush. The best times to brush are before bed and after breakfast. Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste.
- * **Put your child to bed with hugs and love, not a bottle.** Stop using bottles when your baby turns 1. If your child won't go to sleep, give him or her a pacifier.
- * **Rethink the drink.** Give your child milk, water or 100 percent fruit juice with meals. Avoid giving Kool-Aid, Gatorade, Sunny Delight, Capri Sun, soda or other sweet drinks to your child – they cause cavities.
- * **Eat well.** Give your child healthy snacks like cheese, vegetable sticks and fresh fruit. Keep sweet foods like cakes, pastries and candy for special treats, not every day.
- * **Lift the lip and look.** Children change quickly. Every month, lift your child's lip and check all of his or her teeth for the first signs of cavities. If you see white or brown spots on the teeth or anything unusual, contact your child's dentist or physician.
- * **Ask your doctor or nurse if your child needs fluoride varnish.** Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and help stop cavities that have already started.
- * **Take your child to the dentist.** When your child turns 1 year old, schedule a dental checkup. Children should see the dentist at least once a year; more often if they have had cavities. If you do not have a dentist, ask your physician to check your child's teeth.



For more information, contact:
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NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

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