

LIFETIME SMILES BEGIN EARLY



TIPS FOR HEALTHY TEETH BIRTH TO 6 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.

* **Good dental habits should begin before the first tooth appears.** After feedings, clean your baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth or gently brush your baby's gums using water on a baby toothbrush with soft bristles. Remember, a clean and germ-free mouth is a healthy place for teeth to grow.

* **Put your baby to bed with hugs and love, not a bottle.** Sleeping with a bottle of formula, juice or other sweetened liquids is a leading cause of cavities in young children. Consider giving your baby a pacifier instead of a bottle when putting him or her to bed.

* **Put only breast milk, formula or plain water in your baby's bottle.** Sweet drinks like Gatorade, Kool-Aid and soda pop have sugar that causes cavities and should not be put in the bottle.

* **Cavities are caused by germs that your baby gets from you.** Clean pacifiers with warm soapy water, not with your mouth. Don't share spoons or cups with your baby, and don't share pacifiers or bottles with other babies.

* **Strong baby teeth start with you.** Moms with good oral health are more likely to have healthy babies with good oral health. Moms can limit the risk of early childhood tooth decay by making sure their own teeth are clean and healthy. To keep your mouth healthy, brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, floss daily and have regular dental checkups.

For more information, contact:
Oral Health Program
Division of Family Health
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200
701.328.2356 or 800.472.2286
www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Adapted with permission from materials funded by the First 5 Children and Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County, Calif.

