

# Healthy Teeth & Gums

Kids Age 0-6



## How to Handle Common Oral Health Problems

The best way to handle common oral health problems is by preventing them. Tooth decay is the number 1 childhood chronic disease. You are your child's first defense to keep them from developing tooth decay. Help your child develop good habits.

- Take your baby to the dentist within 6 months of getting their first tooth and no later than age 1. See the dentist at least yearly for regular checkups.
- Help your child brush their teeth twice a day. Babies without teeth should have their gums wiped with a soft cloth.
- Floss your child's teeth daily.
- Limit sugary snacks and juices as these stay on the teeth and cause decay.
- Never put your baby or toddler to bed with a bottle or sippy cup.
- Babies should wean to a cup by age 1.
- Periodically look in your child's mouth. Changes in tooth color or swelling of the gums may be a sign that you need to contact the dentist.



Healthy  
SMILES

## **Toothache**

A toothache can be caused by many things such as grinding of teeth, decay, an injury or infection.

- Rinse the mouth with warm water to clean it.
- Use floss to remove any trapped food.
- Place a cold compress or ice wrapped in cloth on the outside of the cheek for temporary relief of pain. Do not use heat or place aspirin on the tooth or gums.
- When to see the dentist: constant and severe pain, pressure, swelling or drainage of gum around tooth, lingering or chronic pain after eating hot or cold foods, or sharp pain when biting down on food.

## **Tooth Eruption Pain**

Children can experience pain from a loose baby tooth pinching the gum tissue or due to an erupting permanent tooth.

- Place a cold compress or ice wrapped in cloth on the outside of the cheek for temporary relief of pain. Do not use heat or place aspirin on the tooth or gums.
- When to see the dentist: pain lasting for more than a week.

## **Sharp Pain When Eating**

There are several possible causes of pain such as decay, loose fillings or cracked tooth.

- See the dentist if the pain is constant and severe or lasting more than a week.

## **Bleeding Gums**

There are many causes for bleeding gums such as using a hard toothbrush, brushing the teeth too hard, forcing floss between teeth, cutting a new tooth or gum infection.

- Replace toothbrush with an extra soft bristle brush every 3 to 4 months.
- Use gentle circular motions to brush teeth.
- Continue to brush the affected area.
- Gently and carefully slide floss in between teeth and follow the curve of the teeth.
- When to see the dentist: red swelling or drainage of gum, persistent bad breath, lingering or chronic bleeding and severe, or ongoing pain.

## **Bitten Lip or Tongue**

Babies and young children fall a lot as they begin to pull up on furniture and start to toddle. You can help prevent injuries. Never leave your child unsupervised in a walker or alone on a bed or changing table. Install baby gates at stairways.

- Gently clean the area with a cloth.
- Apply direct pressure to the bleeding area.
- Apply cold compress, if there is swelling.
- Go to emergency room if the bleeding does not stop.

## **Knocked Out Baby Teeth**

- Do not put the baby tooth back in the socket. This could damage the permanent tooth bud growing underneath.
- Call the dentist as soon as possible.
- If possible, save the tooth for the dentist to examine.

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