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.
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: 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.

Sharp Pain When Eating
There are several possible causes of pain such as decay, loose filings 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.