



# Top 10 Facts About Children's Oral Health

1. Dentists recommend that you bring your child in for his or her first check-up within six months of the appearance of the first tooth, and no later than the first birthday. Your dentist will generally want to see your child every six months.
2. Baby teeth begin to fall out around age 6 but some are present until age 12! Baby—or primary—teeth are important in the development of a child's mouth and spacing of adult teeth.
3. Thumb sucking and pacifiers aren't problems. If these activities persist after age 3, however, consult your dentist.
4. Teeth brushing is a life-long habit that develops in early childhood. Dentists recommend cleaning a baby's gums with a clean damp cloth after every feeding and brushing with a 'smear' or rice-sized dab of fluoride toothpaste after the first tooth appears. After age 3, a pea-size amount is recommended. Parents should supervise brushing until age 6 or longer. Kids should brush twice a day, just like adults, using toothpaste with the ADA Seal of Acceptance.
5. Tooth decay is by far the most common childhood disease. It is five times more common in children than asthma. It is also one of the most preventable diseases.
6. You can minimize the chances your young child will develop cavities. Provide only clean pacifiers; don't dip them in sugar. Don't lick a child's spoon or pacifier to clean them, bacteria that live in adult saliva can cause cavities in children. Don't put juice or soda in a child's bottle, and don't put a child to bed with a bottle containing anything other than water. Limit sugary foods, juices, sports drinks.
7. Sealants act as barriers to cavity-prone areas and are fast and easy to apply. They are usually applied to the chewing surfaces of adult back teeth starting around age 6 and are used to cover deep pits and grooves. Sealants protect the tooth surface from decay.
8. Community water fluoridation is a successful public health measure that has greatly reduced tooth decay in kids since it was first used in 1945. If your child doesn't drink fluoridated water, your dentist can provide fluoride treatments.
9. Custom-fitted mouthguards are important for sporting activities. Providing a mouthguard for your child will help protect teeth and facial bones from damage. A good item to keep on hand is a tooth preservation kit, available at drug stores or online. Look for the ADA Seal of Acceptance.
10. You can save a broken tooth. If a child's permanent tooth is damaged or knocked out, you can save it by keeping it moist. The best method is to carefully reinsert the tooth in the socket without touching the root. If that is not possible, place the tooth in milk, or use a tooth preservation kit. See a dentist immediately.



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