

# Children's Oral Health

Did you know that cavities are the most chronic childhood disease? Cavities are five times more common than asthma. Children with pain from tooth decay typically miss more school and have lower grade point averages than their peers. But cavities are nearly 100% preventable, and it's easy to protect your child's oral health and ensure a bright future. It's never too early to start!

Adopting healthy habits at any age can help prevent painful tooth decay and affect your child's learning and future success. **Oral health is an important part of overall health, and healthy teeth — even baby teeth — are important for life-long health.** Here are some guidelines you can follow at every stage that will help keep your child's smile healthy.

## Newborns & Infants

- Wipe your baby's gums with a clean cloth, especially after feedings and before bed.
- Put only water in your baby's sippy cup. Juice and milk are fine with meals.
- Once your child gets their first tooth, usually around 6 months, it's time to start brushing. All you need is a baby toothbrush and some water; fluoride toothpaste is not recommended.
- When your child has two teeth that touch, it's time to start flossing.
- Make the first visit to the dentist within six months of getting that first tooth or by your child's first birthday.

## Young Children

- Until age 6, you should brush with your child for two minutes, twice a day.
- Encourage your children to make healthy snack choices like fruits and vegetables.
- Visit the dentist every six months.

## Older Children & Teens

- Make sure your child wears a mouth guard during contact sports.
- Have your child drink tap water (which is fluoridated in Colorado) instead of bottled water.
- Steer clear of sports drinks and sodas.