

Teeth are important for chewing, speaking and appearance. They are also the natural space savers for the permanent teeth. The first baby teeth start to fall out around age 6. This will continue until age 12 or 13.

Tooth decay is serious at any age and can lead to pain, infection and extensive dental treatment. If baby teeth have severe decay, permanent teeth may also be damaged as they develop.

What causes tooth decay in babies?

Bacteria that live in baby's mouth use sugars that make acid that harm teeth. These sugars come from milk, juice, formula or sweetened liquids. Tooth decay can begin when teeth are not cleaned daily and sweet liquids are in the mouth for a long time. This can happen when babies:

- Fall asleep with a bottle or spill-proof cup in their mouth.
- Carry a bottle or spill-proof cup and drink from it all day long.



Remember....

- Clean your baby's gums and teeth daily. The last thing used in your child's mouth before bed should be a toothbrush.
- Breastfeeding is the best way to feed your baby.
- Always hold your baby while feeding. Never prop up the baby bottle or leave the baby alone.
- Never put your baby to bed with a bottle. Feeding should be done when baby is awake.
- Encourage baby to start using a regular open cup, usually between 6 to 9 months of age.
- When baby begins to crawl and walk, make sure he is sitting while drinking from a cup or bottle.
- Avoid sweetened beverages such as pop, fruit drinks and sweetened tea.
- Keep your own mouth clean and healthy to prevent the spread of decay-causing germs to your baby.

Tips to help your baby fall asleep without a bottle or spill-proof cup:

- Hold your baby and rock in a rocking chair.
- Play soft music or sing quietly to your baby.
- Read a book or tell your child a quiet story to prepare for sleep.



Accountable



Collaborative



Common Goals



Dedicated



Evidence-Based Practice



Wellbeing