

Good oral health should begin before the first tooth appears.

Soon after birth, begin wiping your baby's gums daily with a clean, damp washcloth.

Never put your baby to bed with a bottle.

When teeth come in, brush twice daily with a rice-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.

Avoid sharing utensils and never clean their pacifier in your mouth.

Avoid foods and drinks containing sugar during the first year.

Wean your baby from their bottle by 12-14 months of age.

During well-baby visits, ask about oral health and fluoride.

Baby's first visit to dentist should be by age 1.

How Much Juice?

Age (Years)	Recommendation
Under 1 year	No juice
1-3 years	4 oz. per day
4-6 years	4-6 oz. per day
7-18 years	8 oz. per day

Recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Whole fruit is always preferred.

For more information on oral health, visit health.maryland.gov/oral-health.

What causes cavities?

Bacteria (germs) cause cavities.

The germs that cause cavities feed on sugars in sweetened drinks and foods to form acid. These germs are found in plaque.

Plaque is a sticky substance that forms on your teeth after eating. Acid attacks and weakens tooth enamel — the protective outer layer of a tooth.

A new acid attack begins with every sip or bite of a sugary food or drink. Frequent snacking or sipping means all-day acid attacks.



MARYLAND
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ORAL HEALTH FOR KIDS
Help prevent or stop tooth decay in children.

Good oral health — no matter your child's age — should begin before their first tooth appears.

From birth to six months:

Baby teeth are important. Tooth decay causes infection and pain. A clean and germ-free mouth is a healthy place for teeth to grow.

Good dental health starts before the first tooth appears. After feedings, wipe your baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth.

The germs that cause cavities spread from person to person. Clean pacifiers with warm soapy water, not your mouth. Avoid sharing spoons and cups. Do not share pacifiers with other babies.

Breast milk and formula are the only recommended food/beverages at this age. Avoid dipping pacifiers in sugar or honey.

Baby teeth help your child talk, eat, and grow. The first baby tooth appears at around six months.

Six months to one year:

Brush your baby's teeth with fluoride toothpaste. Place a rice-sized smear on the toothbrush. Brush after breakfast

and before bed. Make brushing easier by putting your baby's head in your lap.

Put your baby to bed with hugs and love, not a bottle. Sleeping with a bottle of milk, formula, juice, or any sugary drink can cause cavities.

Once a month, lift the lip. White or brown spots along the gum line may be signs that cavities are forming. Contact your baby's dentist or pediatrician if you see anything unusual.

One year to three years:

Schedule the first dental visit by your baby's first birthday. If you do not yet have a dentist, ask your pediatrician to check your baby's teeth.

Wean your toddler off the bottle. Teach your toddler to drink from a regular cup or glass instead of a sippy cup.

Rethink the drink. Give your child milk or water. Avoid giving sweetened drinks like soda, sports drinks, and sweetened juices.

Brush your child's teeth twice a day. Use a small smear of toothpaste with fluoride.

Ask about fluoride varnish. Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and can help stop new cavities from progressing.

Schedule dental checkups. Your child should have a dental checkup every six months.

Three years to six years:

Baby teeth are important. All 20 baby teeth are usually in place by three years of age. Some baby teeth are meant to last until age 12.

Teach your child to brush. Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride. Brush for two minutes after breakfast and before bedtime. Spit, do not rinse, after brushing. Supervise brushing until age 7-8.

Eat well. Give healthy snacks like cheese, vegetable sticks, or fresh fruit. Limit sweet treats to special occasions — not every day.

Schedule a dental checkup every six months. Children with poor toothbrushing habits, who snack frequently on sugary food and drinks — and who have family members with untreated cavities — have the highest risk of developing cavities.