



## Protect Your Child's Developing Smile

The effect of good dental health begins even before your child is born and continues throughout their life. As a parent, you play an important role in helping your child have a healthy smile now and in the future.

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### DID YOU KNOW?

- Good dental health begins even before birth. Not only can a mother's untreated cavities increase the risk of cavities for her child, studies also suggest that untreated gum disease may cause a baby to be born early or to be born underweight.
- Cavity-causing bacteria in the mouth can easily be passed from a parent to a child through saliva.
- When choosing healthy, teeth-friendly snacks, keep in mind, it's not just what you put in your mouth that is important, but also how often you are snacking. Each time you eat or drink anything with sugar, it interacts with the bacteria in the mouth bathing the teeth in acid for about 20 minutes.
- Until your child is able to tie their own shoes, they may not have the hand coordination to properly brush and floss their teeth. Monitor your child's progress and assist with areas of their teeth they may have missed.

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**Learn more about your child's oral development and important steps for a healthy smile**

# Protect Your Child's Developing Smile

## Ages Birth to 2 Years

- Before your baby's teeth come in, wipe their gums with a moistened cloth twice a day.
- Never leave a bottle or sippy cup with anything other than water with your baby between meals or after they fall asleep.
- Avoid adding sweeteners to your baby's pacifier.
- Once the first tooth erupts, begin brushing your baby's teeth with a small, soft toothbrush using a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste. Begin flossing your baby's teeth once two of their teeth touch.

## Ages 2 to 4 - Toddler Years

- Encourage your child to brush their own teeth, then brush their teeth afterward to clean areas they may have missed. Also, brush with your child as they will watch and imitate you.
- Apply toothpaste on your child's toothbrush (about 1/2 of a pea size).
- If you or your other children have a history of cavities, consider having your child visit a pediatric dentist around their first birthday.
- By age three, your child should see a dentist every six months.

## Ages 6 to 13 Years

- Continue to monitor your child's brushing and flossing habits, assisting as needed. Brush teeth for two minutes twice a day.
- Once your child's permanent molars come in, discuss dental sealants with your dentist. Sealants can help reduce cavities by 72 percent.

## Other Important Factors for Dental Health

- Provide nutritious foods and drinks.
- Limit sugary snacks that stick to the teeth.
- Ask about fluoride supplements if your drinking water doesn't include fluoride.

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For more information about Oral Health and Wellness, visit our website at: [www.deltadentalid.com](http://www.deltadentalid.com)