



Taking Care of Your Baby's Teeth:
Dentistry for Individuals with Disabilities



Presented by the
Consumer Caucus
of the
New York State
Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Aldea LaParr
Chairperson

This pamphlet is one in a series intended to help individuals with disabilities get the oral health care they need. It was developed for all individuals with disabilities, their caregivers, dental professionals, and medical professionals associated with good oral health care.

New York State
Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
155 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12210

Phone: 518-486-7505
Fax: 518-402-3505
www.ddpc.state.ny.us

What is Oral Health Care?

Oral health care means taking care of your mouth, including your teeth, gums, and jaws.

To have a healthy mouth means brushing 2 or 3 times a day, flossing once a day and visiting a dentist every 3 to 4 months.

Healthy teeth are very important for your overall good health and good for your baby too. In this pamphlet, there is information to help you take care of your baby's teeth.

What should I know about my baby's teeth?



Taking care of your baby's teeth is very important.



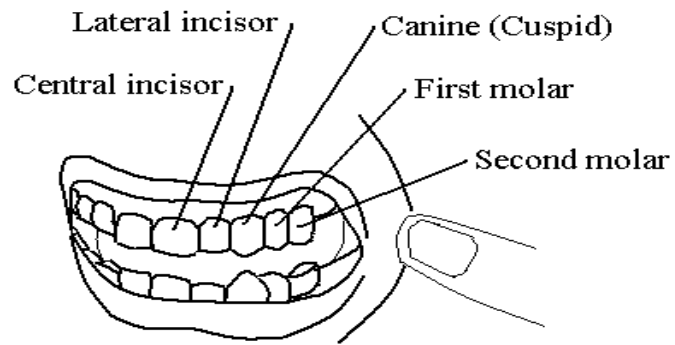
Baby teeth start to come in when a baby is 3 to 6 months old.



Many babies and children have **teething pain** when their teeth are coming in.



Give your baby something clean to chew on that won't cause choking.



By age 3, children have 20 teeth.



Baby teeth will fall out when your child is about 6 years old.



By the age of 6, many children can brush by themselves.

How do I keep my baby's teeth clean and healthy?



Your baby's teeth should be cleaned after every meal.



You can use a soft damp cloth to wipe clean your baby's mouth and teeth.



Brush your baby's teeth with water on a toothbrush when you first see teeth.



Take your baby to the dentist before their first birthday.



When your baby is 2 years old, it is okay to use a pea-sized spot of toothpaste on his toothbrush, as long as he or she does not swallow the toothpaste.



Teach your child to spit by saying "patooyey."
Help the child aim for the sink.



Begin flossing to clean between teeth as soon as 2 teeth come in next to each other.

How do I get my child to brush his or her teeth?

Sometimes, children do not like to brush their teeth.
Here are a few ways to get them to brush.



Get their own special step stool so they can watch themselves in the bathroom mirror.



Get their own rinse cups with their favorite cartoon on the side.



Let them choose their own soft-bristled toothbrush with a favorite character on the handle.



Brush your teeth at the same time your child does.



If you have more than one child, have them all brush together.



Sing a special tooth-brushing song together.



Give your child praise and admire his smile.



Read books together about teeth and tooth-brushing.

What should I feed my baby to make healthy and strong teeth?

Some foods for babies are better than others.



Some good foods to feed your baby are milk, cheese, yogurt, fruits, and vegetables.

They help make babies' teeth healthy and strong.



Foods that are bad for your baby's teeth are sugary foods, such as candy, soda, and crackers.

These foods can cause tooth decay.

Are there other causes of tooth decay in babies?



Babies get **baby bottle tooth decay** when they are put to bed with a bottle or use a bottle between meals.

Give your baby a bottle only at meal times,
or fill the bottle with water.



Teach your baby to drink from a regular
cup as soon as possible to prevent baby
bottle tooth decay.

You can also pass bacteria from your
mouth to your baby's mouth if you share
spoons or cups.

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