

## Remember:

- ✓ Soda, sweet drinks, candy and other sweets can cause cavities that hurt.
- ✓ Snacks like cheese, yogurt, fruits and vegetables are better for your child's teeth than chips, crackers or cereal.
  - ✓ Limit between meal snacks to two a day.
  - ✓ Dilute your child's fruit juice with an equal amount of water.
  - ✓ After your child eats sweets, crackers or juice, brush your child's teeth or rinse the teeth with water.
  - ✓ Adults can spread the germs that cause cavities. Do not put anything in your child's mouth if it has been in your mouth.
- ✓ Brush your teeth and your child's teeth in the morning and right before bedtime with fluoride toothpaste.
- ✓ Children need an adult's help in brushing their teeth until they are eight years old.
- ✓ Children should see a dentist by their first birthday.
- ✓ If your child has Medicaid or Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+), your child also has coverage for dental services.

**Remember, baby teeth are important!  
Make sure your child's teeth and gums  
stay healthy.**



## Cavity-Free at Three

**A statewide effort  
to prevent oral disease  
in young children,  
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## Caring for Your Baby's Teeth

Your child needs healthy teeth and gums for talking, eating and smiling. There are simple things you can do to help your child have a healthy mouth now and in the future! Be a part of keeping your child cavity-free.



### What you can do:

- ✓ Before your baby's teeth come in, wipe the baby's gums with a soft, clean wash cloth after each feeding.
- ✓ After the teeth come in, wipe your baby's teeth after each feeding, especially along the gum line, with a soft cloth or soft bristled toothbrush.
- ✓ As soon as your baby's teeth erupt, brush once in the morning and once before bedtime. Use a small smear (size of child's pinky nail) of fluoridated toothpaste. When finished, wipe off the teeth until your baby is old enough to spit it out.
- ✓ Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle containing anything other than water.
- ✓ Healthy habits start at a young age. As your child grows and begins to eat solid foods, make sure the food you provide is healthy. A healthy diet will help your child grow and develop normally. It will also help protect your child's teeth.
- ✓ Avoid sugary foods such as candy, soda, sugary cereals and chips. Avoid sticky foods such as raisins or fruit roll-ups.



- ✓ Avoid putting things in your mouth and then putting them in the mouth of your baby. Avoid saliva-sharing behaviors such as sharing a spoon when tasting your baby's food, cleaning a dropped pacifier with your mouth or wiping your baby's mouth with saliva. The bacteria that cause tooth decay can be spread from person to person in saliva.
- ✓ Avoid saliva-sharing behaviors between children through their toys, pacifiers, etc.
- ✓ Adults can chew sugar-free gum with xylitol in it right after eating to help prevent the spread of germs to their children.

### Things the Dental or Medical Providers can do:

- ✓ Dentists, dental hygienists, medical doctors and other medical providers also take care of children's teeth.
- ✓ Make sure you take your baby to the dentist by age one. Visit the dentist sooner if you have concerns about your baby's teeth or gums.
- ✓ Ask your child's dentist, medical doctor or dental hygienist about putting fluoride varnish on your child's teeth. This is another great way to protect your child's teeth from cavities.
- ✓ You and your child should visit the dentist on a regular basis or as often as your dentist recommends. Parents' teeth are important too.

