

**YOUR
CHILD'S
SMILE**



A happy, smiling child
is a beautiful sight.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Your unborn baby's teeth

We must start taking care of our children's teeth even before they are born.



What you eat while you are pregnant affects the development of your child's teeth. The baby's teeth

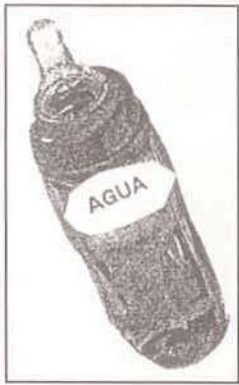
begin to develop between the 3rd and 6th months of pregnancy. You must eat sufficient amounts of nutrients - especially vitamins A, C, D, protein, calcium and phosphorus. Talk to your doctor about your diet. He may recommend supplements.

Baby teeth

These are your child's first set of teeth, also known as milk teeth.

They will be replaced by the permanent teeth. It is very important to take care of the baby teeth. They must not be pulled out. These teeth need to be kept healthy until the permanent teeth appear.

A healthy diet for a healthy smile.

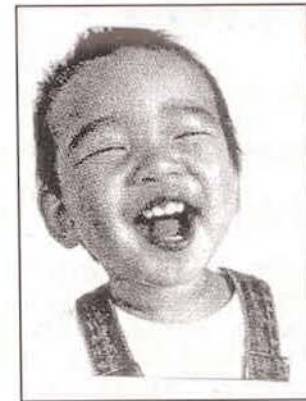


Never put your baby to sleep, during the day or at night, with a bottle. If the baby insists on having a bottle, fill it only with pure water. Any drink with sugar (including juice or milk) helps to decay the teeth.

- Do not let your child fall asleep at your breast. Mother's milk contains sugar.
- Never add sugar or honey to the pacifier.
- Between meals, give your children healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, low-fat yogurt, and low-fat cheese. Avoid sweets, chips, and soda. Foods that are sugary and starchy produce plaque and acid that cause tooth decay and gum disease.

The shape of a smile

When a baby tooth is pulled out, the permanent teeth tend to move and occupy this empty space. Then, when the permanent teeth appear, they may come out crooked. If the dentist must pull out a child's milk tooth, he will recommend a space maintainer. This way the permanent teeth will come out in their proper place.

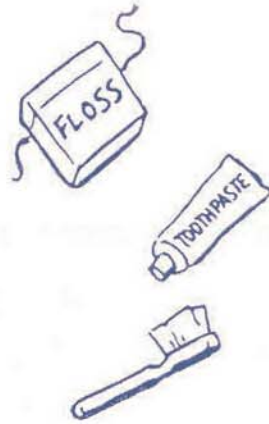


Your child must not suck his thumb or use a pacifier when his permanent teeth are about to come out. This may cause the permanent teeth come out crooked.

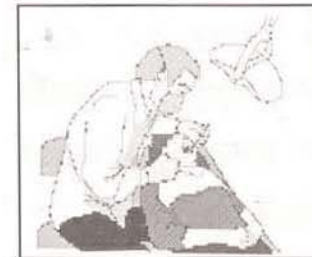
The first permanent molars appear at around 6 years of age. They must be preserved. They help to determine the shape of the lower part of the face and influence the health and position of the other permanent teeth.

Taking care of your baby's teeth: 0 - 2 years

- It is important that you start taking care of your baby's oral health from the day he is born. Healthy teeth come from healthy gums. After each meal, clean the baby's teeth, gums, and tongue with a wet washcloth or gauze.
- Make sure you practice good oral hygiene yourself. If the baby puts his fingers in your mouth and then in his own, he is transmitting your bacteria into his mouth.
- Using a special small, soft brush, start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears. Use dental floss as soon as two teeth touch each other. Special toothbrushes and toothpaste for children will make it easier for you to clean his teeth.



- Fluoride is very important to strengthen the teeth's enamel. At 12 months, start using a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Teach your child to spit out the extra toothpaste and rinse his mouth thoroughly after brushing
- Take the baby to the dentist when he turns one year old. He will explain how to clean the child's mouth and will discuss diet.



- From then on, visit the dentist every six months. The dentist can make sure the teeth are developing normally and are coming out in the right position. He will check for cavities. He will also check to see if the child's bite is adequate, that is that the lower and upper jaws meet correctly.

The young child learns to take care of his smile: 3-7 years



- Teach your child to brush his teeth after every meal and to floss once a day. Brush and clean between your child's

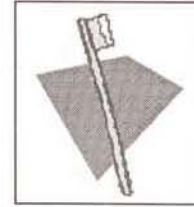
teeth with dental floss until he can do it on his own.

- Between meals, the child should rinse his mouth thoroughly with water after eating anything. When possible, he should brush his teeth.



- Set an example for your child by brushing and flossing your own teeth regularly.

- Generally by 4 or 5 years of age, a child should be able to brush his teeth under an adult's supervision. By 7, he should be able to do it on his own.



- Check the condition of your child's toothbrush frequently. Replace it if the fibers are crooked or frayed, or after the child has been ill.

- Teach your child to brush his tongue to keep his breath fresh and remove bacteria.

- If advisable, the dentist will put sealants on the permanent molars to protect them.



Words to keep in mind

Fluoride is a mineral that helps to strengthen the teeth's enamel and helps prevent cavities. The best way of taking fluoride is to drink fluoridated water. Find out if the water in your community is fluoridated. If not, your child's dentist may recommend that you give him extra fluoride.

Plaque is an invisible substance made up of bacteria. When it combines with starches or sugars, plaque sticks to the tooth surface. It produces an acid that wears down the enamel and produces cavities.

Sugar comes in many forms and has many names. Other names are sucrose, lactose, and fructose. Honey and corn syrup are forms of sugar. Fruit juice and milk contain sugar.

Sealant is a transparent substance the dentist places on the chewing surface of the back molars. It helps to protect the molars and reduce the possibility of decay. Ask the child's dentist if he could benefit from sealants.

A good dentist for your child ...

- is patient and gentle with children
- stresses prevention and dental hygiene and teaches the child how to practice them
- tries above all to save the teeth, not to pull them out
- explains to you the treatment, the price, and other options; answers all your questions
- accepts your decision of getting a second opinion if a major treatment is involved

How to Find and Pay for a Dentist

Child Health Plus A & B

If you belong to a health plan, you should call and ask them to help you get a dentist.

Community Choice Health Plans	1-800-619-2247
Empire	1-800-431-1914
Fidelis Care New York	1-800-719-9874
Affinity, HIP and Hudson Health Plan (call Health Plex)	1-800-468-9868

The following centers provide low-cost dental care based on a sliding-fee scale.

Neighborhood Health Centers

Greenburgh Health Center 330 Tarrytown Road, White Plains	989-7600
Hudson River Community Health Center 1037 Main Street, Peekskill	734-8800
Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center 107 West 4 th Street	699-7200
Yonkers Community Health Center 87 Riverdale Avenue	968-4898

Open Door Family Health Centers

Ossining 165 Main Street	941-1263
Rye Brook 90 South Ridge Street	937-8899
Sleepy Hollow 80 Beekman Avenue	631-4141

Westchester County Department of Health District Offices

White Plains 85 Court Street, 1 st Floor	995-5800
Yonkers 20 South Broadway, 2 nd and 4 th Floors	231-2523

FREE OR AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE

Most children in New York State who are younger than 19 qualify for **Child Health Plus A** or **Child Health Plus B**, regardless of their immigration status or that of their parents. These insurance plans are free or low-cost. They include dental services.

If your child does not have insurance, call one of the organizations listed below. Someone will help you complete an application step-by-step and will answer all your questions or concerns.

Facilitated Enrollment Project

Westchester County Department of Health	813-5629
CLUSTER	963-6440 ext. 254 or 257
Child Care Council of Westchester	761-3456 ext. 136 or 165
WestCOP	592-5600 ext. 148 or 162
Westchester Hispanic Coalition	948-8466 ext. 21 or 22