

Your child doesn't have to fear the dentist.

Parents often wonder about the importance of caring for their children's primary (or baby) teeth. Often, they say, "It doesn't make any difference; they're going to lose those teeth in a few years." However, baby teeth are important.

When should your young child visit the dentist?¹

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American Society of Dentistry for Children recommend that your child's first dental visit occur **between the ages of 6 months and one year**. Why? Because decay can occur with the first tooth.² Taking your child to the dentist by his or her first birthday is the best way to catch any problems at the earliest stages.

What will you and your child experience?

This visit is designed for preventive evaluations, sharing information, and to promote good life-long oral hygiene habits. Your dentist, hygienist, or assistant will provide information on how to properly clean your child's teeth and mouth. The dentist will examine the mouth and teeth for decay, evaluate any oral habits (such as thumb sucking) that may be detrimental, and discuss possible fluoride needs. In addition, your child becomes familiar with the dental chair at an early age.

Let your child learn from your example.

As children grow, they tend to watch and model the behaviors of the adults around them. Brush twice a day, and floss at least once daily. Visit your dentist regularly. Select snacks carefully, checking the nutritional value and sugar content. Early preventive measures, good oral health habits and regular visits to the dentist are ways you can help your child achieve a lifetime of strong healthy teeth and winning smiles.



5 steps to help make your child's first visit to the dentist a pleasant experience

1. Select a dentist who is caring, friendly, and makes the child's first visit a "special occasion"
2. If the child is old enough, discuss the visit beforehand, assuring the child that the dental office staff cares about his or her health
3. Don't share your anxiety about going to the dentist
4. Don't let others tell your child about painful dental experiences
5. Select an appointment time that's best for your child; early morning is usually a good time

By building a pattern of positive dental experiences from the beginning, you can reduce anxiety or fear, and enjoy many stress-free visits in the future.

it's time to feel better

