

ORAL HYGIENE ▼

Children 0 - 6 months of age:

- Wipe baby's gums with a clean, damp cloth after feeding;
- When baby teeth start to appear, clean them with a small, soft toothbrush moistened in water.
- The most important time to brush is before bedtime.



Children 6 months - 3 years of age:

- Brush baby's teeth only with water;
- Use very little fluoride toothpaste; (grain of rice amount), if the dentist recommends it;
- The most important time to brush is before bedtime.



Children 3 - 6 years of age:

- Supervise/assist the child during brushing;
- Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste, if the child can spit it out. If not, use just water;
- The most important time to brush is before bedtime.

NUTRITION MATTERS ▼

- Breastfeeding is the best way to feed your child. Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first 6 months of life and should be continued for 2 years or more;
- Avoid prolonged and/or frequent feedings during the night after the teeth appear in the mouth;
- If you decide to use a pacifier, it should not be dipped in anything sweet (e.g., sugar, honey, syrup, jam, etc.);
- Put only water in the bottle at naptime or bedtime, if necessary;
- Sippy or open cups and bottles between meals should contain just water;
- Do not give your child foods or drinks containing sugar often (e.g., candy, juice);
- Choose healthy, non-sugary snacks (e.g., cheese, milk, yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, nut butters, raw or cooked vegetables and fruit, whole grain crackers and bread, or unsweetened cereals).

KEY MESSAGES ▼

Lift-the-Lip once a month to see if the child has tooth decay. Things to look for:

- Chalky-white spots at the gum line that will not brush off. **Visit a dentist within 2-4 weeks.**
- Brown/yellow spots that will not brush off and/or visible holes/broken teeth. **Visit a dentist immediately.**

Your child's **first dental visit** should be by their first birthday or 6 months after the first tooth appears. The dentist will let you know the date of the next dental visit.

Toronto Public Health has several dental clinics located throughout the city. Our staff speak many languages and are happy to assist you. If you are not eligible for our services, you may qualify for dental care at a reduced cost in another facility. Please contact Toronto Public Health by calling one of the dental clinics listed, emailing dentalservices@toronto.ca or visiting: www.toronto.ca.