



# YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DENTIST VISIT

We'll help you start things off  
with a smile.

You may think that caring for your child's baby teeth isn't important. After all, they're just going to fall out. But baby teeth are very important and need to be taken care of properly. Below are some simple tips to get your child on the path to good oral health today, so he or she will be all smiles in the future.

## 1. Set a good example.

From day one, your little one has been watching everything you do, including how you take care of your teeth. Set a good example by brushing twice a day and flossing at least once. Visit the dentist regularly, and try to choose healthy, nutritious snacks. Setting up good habits early can mean a lifetime of healthy teeth and happy visits to the dentist for your child.

## 2. Choose a dentist wisely.

Every child – and every dentist – is different, so it's important to find the dentist that's the right fit for you and your family. To start, you may want to ask local friends and family with children who they see. From there, you can do your own research. Look for a dentist who's caring, friendly and patient with children and, most of all, someone who makes you and your child feel comfortable.

## 3. Schedule sooner than you think.

According to the Academy of General dentistry, a child should visit the dentist six months after his or her first teeth erupt. That may sound early, but tooth decay can happen with your baby's very first tooth.<sup>1</sup> That's why taking your child to the dentist by his or her first birthday is the best way to catch any problems early. But if your child is over one already and hasn't been to the dentist yet, don't worry. Simply make an appointment as soon as you can.

## 4. Time your appointment right.

Pick an appointment time when your child is usually well-rested and cooperative. Also make sure your child has had a light meal and brushes their teeth before their appointment so they won't be hungry during their visit.<sup>2</sup>

## 5. Give a pep talk.

Talk with your child about what to expect during the visit and get them excited. Maybe even pick up a children's book at the library about a first trip to the dentist. As much as you can, don't let others tell your child scary stories about the dentist. And if you're anxious on the day of their first visit, try not to show it. Their first visit to the dentist is a chance for you and your child to get comfortable with the whole routine. Your dentist and/or hygienist will show you how to properly clean your child's teeth and mouth. The dentist will examine your child for tooth decay, discuss fluoride needs and review oral habits like thumb-sucking. And, you'll learn more about how to teach your child good oral hygiene habits.

**Together, all the way.®**



1. Baby Teeth. Retrieved August 12, 2019, from <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/b/baby-teeth>

2. Your Baby's First Dental Visit. (n.d.). Retrieved August 9, 2019, from <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/babies-and-kids/first-dental-visit>.

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