



# Baby's Dental Care

## How to Prevent Early Childhood Caries (Baby Bottle Decay)

*Congratulations on becoming new parents!  
Strong, healthy baby teeth will help ensure  
that your baby's smile gets off to a healthy start.*

As new parents you may not be aware that when your child's teeth first start to appear, they begin to collect plaque. Plaque is a sticky film, which forms on teeth and promotes the growth of bacteria. The bacteria in plaque use sugar to produce acid, which in turn attacks tooth enamel causing decay. If sugary liquids such as milk, breast milk, formula, and fruit juices are allowed to remain in the mouth for prolonged periods of time, the acid will cause severe tooth decay known as early childhood tooth caries (ECC), also known as "baby bottle decay" or "nursing tooth" decay. If untreated, this will destroy the baby's teeth.

The pediatric dentists at Children's Dentistry, PA have the following recommendations for you to avoid baby bottle tooth decay:

- Never let your baby or toddler fall asleep with a bottle or sippy cup containing sugary liquids or a pacifier dipped in sugar or honey. Give your baby only water or a clean pacifier and do not continue to nurse once baby is asleep.
- Begin oral care early. Wipe your baby's gums with clean gauze after each feeding. As soon as that first tooth appears, brush with a little water and a soft brush.
- Check your baby's teeth regularly. If you see white or stained areas on the teeth, take him or her to the pediatric dentist for a consultation as soon as possible.
- Thumb or finger sucking is normal for infants and most stop by age two. We discourage it after age four as it can create crowding, crooked teeth, or bite problems.
- Be sure to feed your baby a balanced, healthy diet. Sugar and starch is the leading cause of tooth decay, but you do not have to leave them out entirely. Food with sugar and starch is safer for teeth if eaten with a meal, but not before bedtime and not as a snack. If given between meals, follow snack with a sip of water; this will help clean the mouth of residues.
- Schedule your baby's first visit to the pediatric dentist by the first birthday. Why so soon? You want to begin a prevention program and establish a positive relationship between your child and the dentist. It is important to take care of those baby teeth. They help your baby chew food, learn to talk clearly, and they give your baby's face a beautiful smile.



**Dr. Mimy's  
Children's Dentistry, PA**  
Mirna Bendeck, DDS • Marcie Berger, DMD • Ryan Owaski, DDS  
*Pediatric Dentists*  
200 Village Square Crossing, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410  
Tel: 561-626-9887 email: info@DrMimy.com  
**[www.DrMimy.com](http://www.DrMimy.com)**