

Complete #CavityFreeND Guide



Birth - 2 Years

Assess your child's risk of developing cavities

When your child's first tooth erupts, it's essential to develop routine brushing habits right away to prevent tooth decay, which is the most common and largely preventable chronic childhood disease.

Use the risk assessment chart below to learn if your kid is at risk for developing cavities. Please keep in mind as you answer "yes" to statements marked with a warning symbol, this may suggest that your child is at high risk for decay or other dental conditions.

After completing this cavity risk assessment, whether your child is at high or low risk, we recommend scheduling a dental visit. Click [here](#) to find a dentist near you.

RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	CLINICAL FINDINGS
<p>⚠️ Mother or primary caregiver had active decay in the past 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>⚠️ Continual bottle/sippy cup use with fluid other than water <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Mother or primary caregiver does not have a dentist <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Frequent snacking <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Special health care needs <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Medicaid eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Existing primary dentist <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Drinks fluoridated water or takes fluoride supplements (if recommended by dentist) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Fluoride varnish in the last 6 months <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Has teeth brushed twice daily <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>⚠️ White spots or visible decalcifications in the past 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>⚠️ Obvious decay <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>⚠️ Restorations (fillings) present <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Visible plaque accumulation <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Gingivitis (swollen/bleeding gums) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Teeth present <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Healthy teeth <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Source: [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

What to expect for the first dental visit

For your child's first dental exam, we've put together a list of tips and what to expect.

Before the appointment, you should

- Use a toothbrush or wet cloth to clean your child's teeth
- Gather important medical information if needed
- Be prepared to discuss any dental concerns

During the appointment, the dentist will

- Demonstrate proper cleaning techniques
- Evaluate habits such as pacifier use and thumb sucking
- Look for sores or bumps on the tongue, cheeks, and roof of mouth
- Remove stains or deposits from teeth with a toothbrush or wet cloth
- Evaluate oral hygiene, including risk of tooth decay, and overall health

Sources: [Mayo Clinic](#) and [Dental Plans](#)

Create routine brushing habits

Need help establishing effective brushing habits for your child? Follow these three quick steps:

Step 1. Choose the right dental hygiene products

Pro Tips

- Do not use mouth rinse until age 6
- Choose a manual toothbrush or soft cloth with water
- Starting at 18 months, pick a fluoride toothpaste to use

Step 2. Know the basic brushing habits

Pro Tips

- Use fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice at 18 months
- Change toothbrush every three months or sooner if bristles fray or your child has been sick
- Do not share eating utensils as bacteria that causes tooth decay is contagious

Step 3. Use a chart to track brushing routine

Pro Tips

- Keep track of any dental changes as teeth continue to erupt
- Use a [brushing chart](#) to keep track of brushing habits
- Brush two times a day for at least two minutes in a circular motion

Sources: [Dental Health Services](#) and [Stanford Children's Health](#)

Dietary tips for food and drinks

As your child begins to eat solid food and is introduced to different beverages, it's essential to understand the effects their evolving diet can have on their primary teeth. A healthy diet is low in added sugar and rich in protein, dairy, grain, fruit, and vegetables.

Below, we've put together a list of what to eat and what to avoid:

FOOD	
Do Eat	Avoid
Plenty of fruits and vegetables	Sticky and sugary foods
Acidic foods as a part of a meal only	Acidic foods as a stand-alone snack
A wide variety of fresh fruits	Dried fruits, including raisins
Dairy, including cheese, milk, and plain yogurt	Unhealthy or frequent snacks between meals
Protein-rich foods, including meats and fish	Crunchy foods, including potato chips

DRINKS	
Do Drink	Avoid
Plenty of water	Sugary drinks, including soda
Plenty of milk	No more than 4 oz. per meal for juice intake

Source: [ADA Mouth Healthy](#)