

# Complete #CavityFreeND Guide



## 3 - 5 Years

### Assess your child's risk of developing cavities

Did you know tooth decay is the single most common and largely preventable chronic childhood disease? It's true! That's why it's essential to develop routine brushing habits to prevent tooth decay and other dental conditions overtime.

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 tooth 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 a regular dental visit

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

#### Before the appointment, you should:

- Help your child brush their teeth
- Gather important medical information if needed
- Be prepared to discuss any dental concerns or changes

#### During the appointment, the dentist will:

- Review regular drinking and eating habits
- Evaluate oral hygiene and overall health
- Take x-rays and perform diagnostic procedures if necessary
- Assess the risk of tooth decay and other oral health conditions

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

- Use a toothpaste with fluoride
- Choose a toothbrush with with a large handle and soft bristles (manual or powered)
- Select waxed floss for teeth that are close together and dental tape if teeth are far apart
- Wait until your child is 6 years old to use mouthwash (unless recommended otherwise by the dentist)

### Step 2. Know the basic brushing habits

#### Pro Tips

- Add fluoride toothpaste the size of a pea to a toothbrush (make sure your child spits out excess toothpaste)
- Change toothbrush every three months or sooner if bristles fray or your child has been sick
- Use waxed floss or dental tape to help your child floss every day
- Consider brushing and flossing as a family to model positive behavior

### Step 3. Use a chart to track brushing routine

#### Pro Tips

- Brush twice a day for at least two minutes in a circular motion
- Use a [brushing chart](#) to keep track of brushing habits
- Supervise your child up to age 8 to ensure they're brushing correctly

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

## Dietary tips for food and drinks

As your child continues to age, a wide variety of food and drinks will be added to their diet. That's why it's essential to understand the effects your child's diet can have on their permanent 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 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, plain yogurt	Unhealthy 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](#)