



# Getting Started With Your Child's Oral Health



A PATIENT'S GUIDE

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## Introducing Your Child To Oral Care

For most toddlers, getting them to brush their teeth should not be a chore. In fact, with the right approach starting as soon as the first tooth peeks through the gums, your child will become enthusiastic participants in learning and practicing good oral health habits – for life.



## Get Long-Term Results

The greatest way for your child to develop healthy dental habits is to learn from a good example. If you have a positive attitude about dental health, so will your child. Getting started early is easier than waiting for the "first" dentist appointment. Once your child's teeth begin coming in, you can begin cleaning them by wiping them with a moist washcloth. As your child gets more teeth, begin using a soft child's toothbrush.

When brushing your child's teeth, until they are able to spit, use only a rice-sized amount of children's fluoride toothpaste.

Once your child is able to spit (usually by age two or three), start using a pea size amount of children's fluoride toothpaste.

Children's hands and mouths are smaller than those of adults. Children should use child size toothbrushes designed for their teeth and mouth. Use soft toothbrushes with rounded bristles for gentle cleaning. Change to a new toothbrush every three months.

### **Some suggestions for making tooth brushing fun can include:**

- Letting your child pick out a few toothbrushes with their favourite characters and giving them a choice of which one they want to use each time.
- Brush your own teeth while letting your child observe.
- Let your child brush their own teeth first and you brush their teeth after.
- Read some children's books about tooth brushing.
- Continue to encourage healthy habits even if your child is resistant.

## Steps to obtain good dental habits:

- Brush and floss your child's teeth
- Allow your child's teeth to benefit from fluoride
- Limit snacks high in sugar
- Starting of 12 months of age, take your child to visit a dental health professional regularly

### **Fluorides**

Fluoride makes tooth enamel stronger and less likely to decay. It is a naturally occurring mineral found in many food and water supplies. Unfortunately, currently Calgary city water supply does not contain fluoride. If your child is at a high risk for cavities, we may recommend a fluoride supplement in the form of a chewable tablet or lozenge.

### **At Home - Brush with a Fluoride Toothpaste**

Parents must supervise the use of toothpaste so the child learns to spit out the excess.

### **At the Dentist – Topical Fluoride and Rinses**

To help prevent cavities from developing have topical fluoride varnish applied to your child's teeth. These applications are available at Sandstone Dental. Children over six years of age and at risk for cavities may benefit from a daily home fluoride rinse. Ask us what to look for in a children's fluoride rinse.

## Tips For Brushing & Flossing Children's Teeth

Clean your child's teeth at least twice a day

### Brushing Tips:

- We recommend that you brush your child's teeth for two minutes twice a day.
- Bedtime is the most important time to brush for cavity prevention.
- Use a manual or power toothbrush with soft bristles.
- Hold the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the teeth. Point the bristles to where the gums and teeth meet.
- Move the brush in small circular motions over the teeth and gums.
- Brush the outside, inside and chewing surfaces of the teeth.
- Gently brush the tongue to remove germs and give the mouth a fresh feel.

### Flossing Tips:

- We recommend flossing at least once a day to clean between the teeth and around the gums.
- Take a piece of floss about 45cm (18 inches) long and wrap it around the middle finger of each hand until you have no more than 2.5 cm (1 inch) in length between them.
- With the thumb and index finger of each hand, guide the floss between each tooth using a back and forth motion until the floss reaches the gum line.
- Curve the floss into a C shape around each tooth and slip it under the gum line.
- Slide up and down the side of the tooth.
- Move the floss to the side of the next tooth and repeat.

## Should My Child Always Brush Right Before Bed?

Yes. If you don't lessen the germs (bacteria) and sugars that cause cavities, they have all night to damage your child's teeth and allow the cavity process to start. Plus, when your child is asleep, he or she does not produce as much spit (or saliva). Saliva helps keep the mouth clean. So brushing at bedtime is very important.

## Gum Disease

While many people believe periodontal disease, commonly referred to as gum disease, is an adult problem, studies indicate that gingivitis or inflammation of the gums (the first stage of periodontal disease) is nearly a universal problem among children and adolescents. Advanced forms of periodontal disease are rarer in children than adults, but can occur.

Chronic gingivitis is common in children. It can cause gum tissue to swell, turn red and bleed easily. Gingivitis is preventable and treatable with a regular routine of brushing, flossing and professional dental care. If left untreated, it will eventually advance to more serious forms of periodontal disease.

## Prevention Tips For Children

### Infants

Infants first visit to the dentist should be at 12 months of age. By this time, the baby's first teeth, or primary teeth, are beginning to break through the gums and it is a critical time to spot any problems before they become big concerns.

One problem that can be spotted early is a condition called "baby bottle tooth decay," which is caused by sugary substances in breast milk, formula, and fruit juices, which when left on the teeth can lead to premature decay of your baby's primary teeth, which can interfere with the proper formation of the permanent teeth.

One of the best ways to avoid baby bottle tooth decay is to not allow your baby to nurse on a bottle while going to sleep. Avoid dipping pacifiers in sweet substances such as honey, because this encourages early decay in the baby's mouth. Encouraging your young child to drink from a cup as early as possible will also help stave off the problems associated with baby bottle tooth decay.

### Teething, Pacifiers and Thumb-Sucking

Teething is a time when your child's gums are sore. This is perfectly normal. You can help relieve this by allowing your baby to suck on a teething ring, or gently rubbing your baby's gums with a damp washcloth, or even your finger.

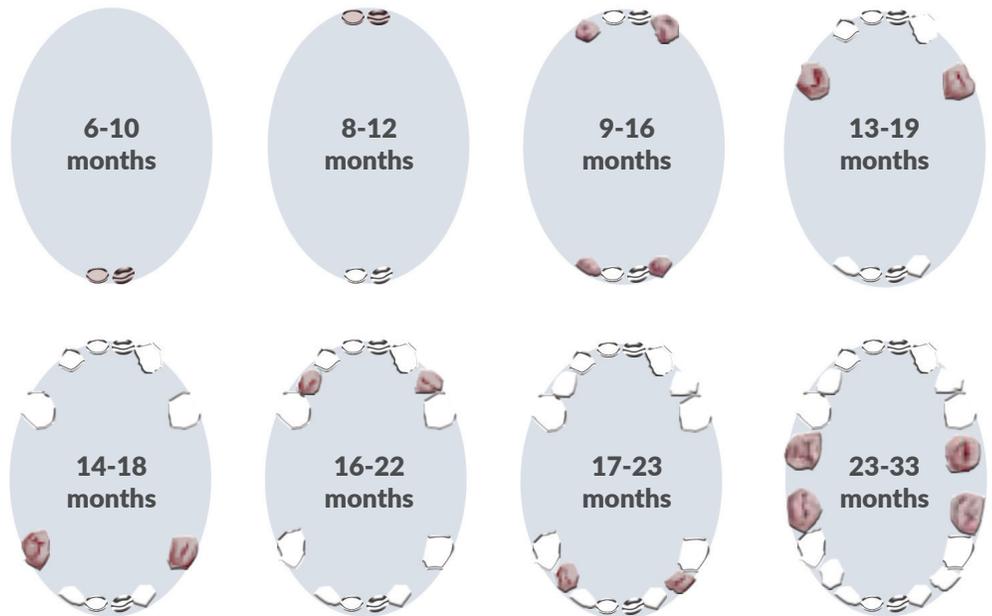
For babies under the age of 3, teething rings and pacifiers can be safely used to facilitate the child's oral needs for relieving gum pain and for suckling. After the age of 3, pacifiers are generally discouraged because they may interfere with the development of your child's teeth.

By age 4, thumb-sucking and the use of a pacifier should be strongly discouraged because it can lead to malformed teeth that become crooked and crowded.

### Primary and Permanent Teeth

Most children will have 20 primary teeth, usually by the age of 3. These teeth are gradually replaced by the age of 12 to 14 with a full set of 28 permanent teeth, and later on around age 18 to 20, four additional molars called "wisdom teeth."

By about three years, all 20 primary (baby) teeth should have appeared



Children can start losing their primary teeth between 5 and 7 years old and continue to lose them until they are 14 years and sometimes even older.

## Toothaches

Toothaches can be common in young children. Sometimes, toothaches are confused with erupting teeth, but the presence of pain could also indicate a serious problem. You can safely relieve a small child's dental pain without the aid of medication by rinsing the mouth with a solution of warm water and table salt. If the pain doesn't subside, use an over the counter medication containing acetaminophen like, Children's Tylenol. If such medications don't help, contact your dentist immediately.

## Injuries

You can help your child prevent oral injuries by closely supervising them during play and not allowing your child to put foreign objects in the mouth. For children involved in physical activities and sports, mouth guards are strongly encouraged, and can prevent a whole host of injuries to the teeth, gums, lips and other oral structures.

Sports mouth guards made by a dentist are custom fitted to your child's mouth and are much more protective than over the counter mouth guards.

If an injury does occur, first rinse the mouth of any blood or other debris and place a cold pack or compress on the cheek near the injury. This will keep down swelling. For a fractured tooth, try to find the fractured piece of tooth and bring it with you to our office and again, apply a cold pack or compress. If the tooth fracture is minor, the tooth can be smoothed or if necessary,

restored by the dentist. If the pulp, also referred to as the nerve, is exposed or damaged a root canal treatment may be necessary. If a child's primary tooth has been loosened by an injury or an emerging permanent tooth, the child may be able to wiggle it out on their own; in some cases, the tooth will easily separate from the gum. Irritation caused by retainers or braces can sometimes be relieved by placing a tiny piece of cotton or gauze on the tip of the wire or other protruding object. If a permanent tooth has been knocked out, try to place the tooth back in its socket. Remember to hold the dislocated tooth by the crown—not the root. If you cannot place the tooth back in its socket, place it in a container of cold milk, saline, or the child's own saliva. Please contact Sandstone Dental as soon as possible following a dental injury, we will advise you on the necessary next steps and if your child need to be seen right away.

## Dental Visits

### Visit a dental health professional regularly

Visiting a dental health professional regularly is just as important for your child's teeth as healthy eating habits and brushing and flossing your child's teeth daily.

### It is recommended that you:

- Start early. We usually recommend the first visit at 12 months of age.
- Teach your child that visiting the dentist is healthy, interesting and pleasant. Remember that your child will notice and be influenced by your attitude to visiting the dentist.

### Three Reasons to Take Your Child to the Dentist

1. You will find out if the brushing and flossing of your child's teeth you do at home is efficient and adequate.
2. The dentist can find and correct problems early.
3. You will have an opportunity to ask questions about your child's dental health.

## Cavity Prevention - Dental Sealants

Sealants fill in the small grooves and crevices on the chewing surface of your child's permanent back teeth to protect and seal the tooth from food and prevent early tooth decay. The application is easy to apply and typically lasts for several years.

## Dos and Don'ts For A Great Smile

### Do...

- Check your baby's teeth once a month, for white or brown spots and anything unusual. Take your child to the dentist if you have a concern.
- Brush your child's teeth for two minutes, twice a day.
- Brush at bed time
- Floss every day
- Visit the dentist regularly
- Make healthy eating and snacking a priority. Be a good role model.
- Ensure your child wears a mouthguard while playing sports. You can find out more about sport mouthguards by calling Sandstone Dental.

### Don'ts...

- Put your child to bed with a bottle or sippy cup. Use only plain water if you must give your baby a bottle in bed.
- Put sugary liquids such as pop, fruit drinks, and sweetened milk in a bottle or sippy cup.
- Share germs. Cavities are caused by bacteria (germs). These germs are passed to babies through saliva. Avoid sharing toothbrushes and spoons. DO NOT place baby's pacifier in your mouth.





# Sandstone Dental

Perfecting One Smile at a Time



Dr. Ashish Oommen



Dr. Peter Manzer



Dr. Rod Tajziehchi

## HOURS

<b>Monday</b>	7:30 am to 5:00 pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	7:30 am to 8:00 pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	7:30 am to 8:00 pm
<b>Thursday</b>	7:30 am to 8:00 pm
<b>Friday</b>	7:30 am to 5:00 pm

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