



# DENTAL CARE FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS



## Dental Care for Infants & Toddlers

Dental care is important from an early age. Though baby teeth will eventually fall out, caring for baby teeth is crucial to prevent tooth decay as well as the pain and infection that can even lead to problems with your child's growth, eating, speaking and learning.

Dental care starts even before your baby's first tooth grows in. Visit the dentist with your child for their first check-up by age 1 or by the time the first tooth erupts to get the tools and advice you need to prevent your child from developing tooth decay.



Janeway Dental Clinic  
300 Prince Philip Drive  
St. John's, NL A1B 3V6

Tel: (709) 777-4353  
Fax: (709) 777-4171

[dentistry@easternhealth.ca](mailto:dentistry@easternhealth.ca)  
[www.janewaydental.ca](http://www.janewaydental.ca)

# ORAL HYGIENE

The foundation of dental health for your baby or toddler's teeth is regular gum wiping and brushing. Here are tips on when and how to clean your child's teeth and gums.

## 1 WIPE YOUR CHILD'S MOUTH AND GUMS



Wipe your newborn's gums with a soft, clean, damp cloth after every feeding until their first tooth appears. This will wipe away bacteria and get your child used to having their mouth cleaned.

To avoid transferring bacteria that can cause tooth decay, don't share toothbrushes, pacifiers or utensils with your child.

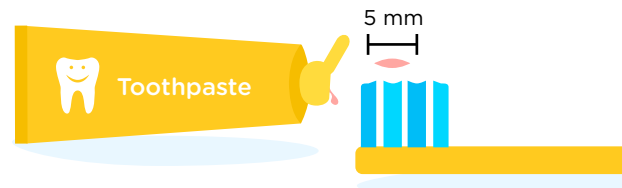
## 2 USE A SOFT BABY TOOTHBRUSH

When teeth first appear, clean them with a soft bristle toothbrush appropriately sized for your child's age.

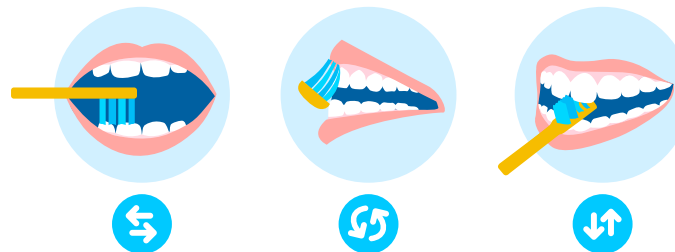


## 3 USE A "RICE GRAIN" AMOUNT OF TOOTHPASTE

Brush your child's teeth with water or toothpaste as soon as teeth appear. If your child is under 3 years of age, use a "smear" or "rice grain" amount of toothpaste to brush. Speak to your dentist about using fluoridated toothpaste.



## 4 GENTLY BRUSH THE TEETH IN CIRCLES



Using gentle circles brush the teeth at a 45 degree angle to clean along the gums, being careful not to scrub too hard as this can hurt your child's gums. Cavities can form on the front, back and top of teeth, so clean every surface of every tooth.

# DIET

A healthy diet is key to preventing tooth decay. Use these diet tips to help keep your child's mouth healthy.

## ✗ DON'TS



- Don't let your child sleep while breastfeeding, or with a bottle of formula, juice or milk in their mouth.
- Prolonged use of bottles can increase the risk of tooth decay. Start weaning them at 12 months, with the goal of being bottle-free by 18 months.

- Juice and sweetened drinks should be limited to 1 cup a day during regularly scheduled meal and snack times, and always use 100% unsweetened juice.

## ✓ DOS



- Breast milk gives your baby nutrition and immune factors that help fight infections.
- Use water in between meals for thirsty children, especially if they use sippy cups or bottles.
- Help your baby learn to drink from an open cup to help prevent tooth decay.