

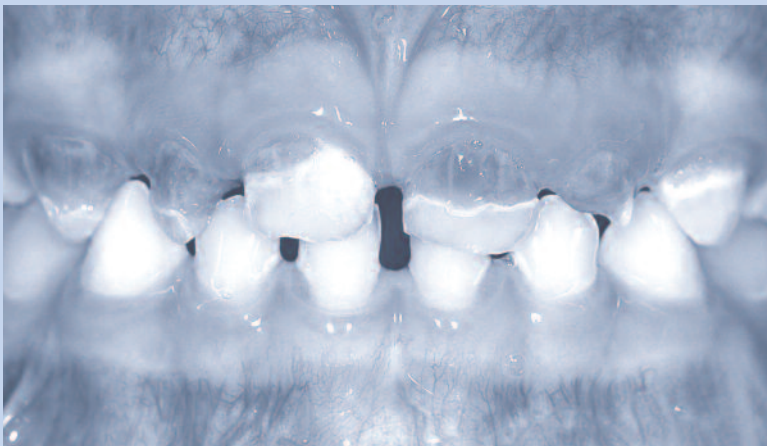
✦ For more information about family health services and programs, call the Family Health Information Line at 1-800-942-7434. Our staff speaks English and Spanish. We're ready to help.

Protect Your Child's Teeth From Early Childhood Tooth Decay

This brochure will show you what you can do during your child's preschool years to make sure he has healthy teeth.

Keep in mind that you have an important role to play in making sure your child eats healthy foods and has healthy teeth. Be a good role model for your child by eating healthy foods yourself, brushing your teeth at least twice a day, and flossing your teeth each night. The habits children learn early stay with them throughout their lives.

Signs of Early Childhood Tooth Decay



THIS BROCHURE WAS DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ORAL HEALTH PROGRAM OF THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

MAKE HEART PART OF YOUR FAMILY
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH





Early childhood tooth decay is a common dental problem that can harm your child's teeth and cause cavities. It can be painful to your child, and can cost a lot of money to fix if it is not treated. The good news is that early childhood tooth decay can be prevented.

What causes early childhood tooth decay?

Most drinks you give your child contain sugar. This includes soda, malta, juice, punch, and even milk. Early childhood tooth decay can happen when your child drinks sugary beverages or liquids often from a bottle or a sippy cup. When your child has a sippy cup or bottle in his mouth for long periods of time, the sugar from the drink stays on his teeth. The sugar harms your child's teeth and causes cavities.

After the first year, your child will start to eat more solid food on his own.

- » Give your child healthy snacks, such as cheese, yogurt, vegetables, and fruit. Limit the amount of sweet and sticky snacks you give, such as cookies, candy, fruit roll-ups, dried fruit, and cakes.
- » Limit the number of sugary drinks your child has each day, such as flavored milk, soda, malta, punch, and juice.
- » It is a good idea to start teaching your child how to use a cup without a lid.

Caring for your child's teeth

Germs in your mouth can be passed from you to your child. Never share utensils, taste food, or clean your child's pacifier with your mouth.

Toothbrushing:

- » Let your child practice brushing his teeth with a soft-bristle toothbrush by himself after meals while you watch.
- » You will need to do a follow up brushing at least once a day (before bed each night) to be sure that all his teeth are clean.
- » If away from home and unable to brush, your child can rinse his mouth with water.

Toothpaste:

- » When your child is between ages one and two, use a toothpaste without fluoride.
- » At age two, begin using toothpaste with fluoride.
- » Ask your doctor or dentist which toothpaste is best for your child.
- » Use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and teach your child how to spit out the toothpaste.

Dental Visits:

- » Your child should visit the dentist at least once a year, or more if suggested by the dentist.
- » Talk to your child's doctor or dentist about making sure your child is getting enough fluoride each day.