

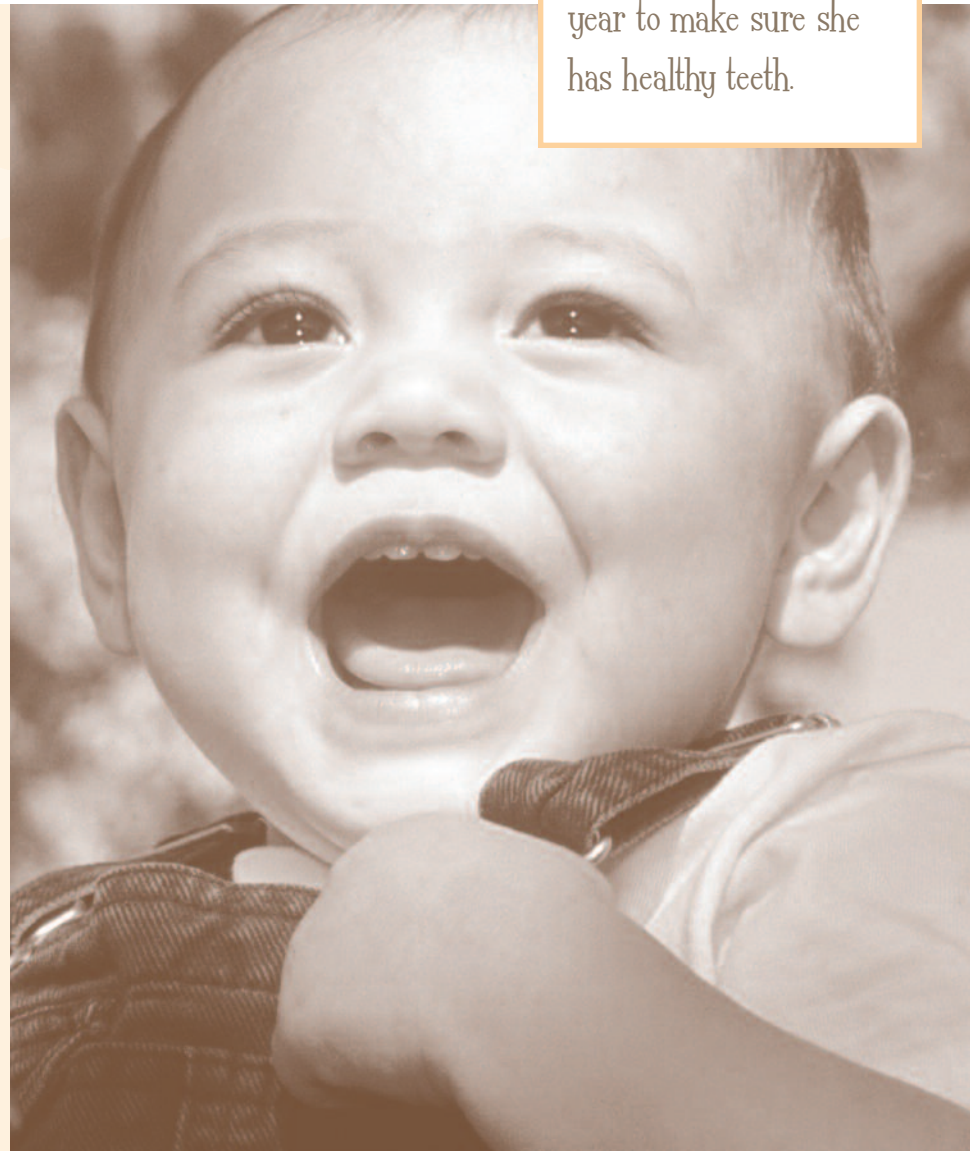
✦ For more information about family health services and programs, call the Family Health Information Line at 1-800-942-7434. Our staff speaks English and Spanish. We're ready to help.

Protect Your Baby's Teeth From Early Childhood Tooth Decay

This brochure will show you what you can do during your baby's first year to make sure she 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



What Causes Early Childhood Tooth Decay?

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

Good nutrition and proper feeding are very important for building healthy teeth during your baby's first year. Breastfeeding gives your baby the best nutrition. Breastmilk is also less likely to cause cavities than formula.

Use bottles and sippy cups wisely

Bottle Use:

- » Only breastmilk, formula, or water should be used in your baby's bottle.
- » Juice should never be given from a bottle.
- » Never use a bottle as a pacifier. Talk to your doctor or nutritionist about other ways to calm your fussy baby.
- » Do not dip pacifiers in sweet foods or drinks.

Cup Use:

- » You can introduce juice in a cup or sippy cup when your child turns six months of age. A sippy cup is any cup that has a lid and helps prevent your child from spilling her drink. This includes cups with built-in straws.
- » Offer WIC-approved juice diluted with water from a cup with meals or snacks only. Your baby does not need more than 4 ounces (half a cup) of WIC juice in a day.
- » Do not let your child fall asleep or walk around with a sippy cup in her mouth. This keeps sugar on the teeth, which can cause cavities.

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.



Caring for your baby's teeth

Germs in your mouth can be passed from you to your baby. Do not share utensils, taste food, or clean your baby's pacifier with your mouth.

Gum and Tooth Cleaning:

- » Clean your baby's gums with a clean washcloth or soft toothbrush after every feeding.
- » After your baby's first tooth comes in, use a soft bristle toothbrush and water to clean her teeth.
- » Toothpaste is not needed during your baby's first year. Use only water when brushing baby's teeth.

Dental Visits:

- » Your child should have her first visit to the dentist by the time she turns one year old.
- » Talk to your child's doctor or dentist about making sure your child gets enough fluoride each day.