

# Oral Health Milestones for Children

From pregnancy to early childhood, set the stage for a lifetime of good oral hygiene practices and healthy smiles for your child

## Pregnancy and oral health

Good oral hygiene early in life not only preserves and promotes oral health but also sets the foundation for lifelong health and well-being. Recognising the interconnectedness of oral health with the broader aspects of health underscores the importance of comprehensive oral healthcare practices



### Dental health matters when pregnant

Pregnancy hormones make expecting mothers more prone to gum diseases and cavities, impacting their baby's health as well<sup>1-3</sup>

Depending on your pre-pregnancy oral hygiene, get regular dental health checkups during pregnancy and at least once before the baby arrives



### Importance of primary teeth in infants and early dental care

Babies are born with 20 primary/milk teeth hidden beneath their gums that eventually appear, fall out, and give way to permanent/adult teeth<sup>5</sup>

## Primary teeth



Develop in the first trimester of pregnancy



Essential for chewing, talking, and smiling



Help maintain space for adult teeth



Decaying milk teeth can infect and harm the incoming adult teeth

## Tips to care for primary teeth



Begin caring for your baby's teeth as soon as they appear, as tooth decay can start early<sup>6,7</sup>



Clean the child's teeth twice a day with toothpaste containing 1,000 ppm fluoride<sup>8</sup>. Higher fluoride concentration may be considered depending on the age of the child and caries risk<sup>9</sup>



Establish healthy dietary habits. Provide a healthy balanced diet free from added sugars<sup>10</sup>. Do not add food or drinks with added sugar during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of life



Avoid bottle-feeding your baby at night



Avoid sweetening pacifiers with sugar or honey<sup>7</sup>



Teach your child to use age-appropriate utensils, such as an open cup for drinking water and other liquids around one year of age



Schedule your baby's first dental care provider visit by the time they are one-year-old, for check-ups and oral health guidance<sup>11</sup>

## Oral health care in children

### Before primary teeth appear



Gently clean your baby's gums with a soft wet cloth between feedings<sup>5</sup>



Use cold teething aids to alleviate teething pain<sup>5</sup>



A pacifier may be used to prevent finger-sucking but should be discontinued by age 4<sup>5</sup>

### Up to 3 years of age



Brush teeth twice daily for about 2 minutes using stannous fluoride toothpaste<sup>12</sup>



Start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as the first milk tooth appears



Use children's fluoride toothpaste containing 1,000 ppm of fluoride\*<sup>13</sup>



Visit a dental professional as soon as the first tooth appears



Use toothpaste the size of a grain of rice<sup>13</sup>



Put fluoride varnish on the child's teeth at the dental office

### Children aged 3–6 years



Brush at least twice daily for about 2 minutes using stannous fluoride toothpaste<sup>12</sup>



Use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste<sup>13</sup>



Use children's fluoride toothpaste containing 1,000 ppm of fluoride\*<sup>13</sup>



Continue putting fluoride varnish

### Children aged 7 years and above



Brush at least twice daily for about 2 minutes using stannous fluoride toothpaste<sup>12</sup>



Apply toothpaste up to the full length of brush<sup>13</sup>



Use a toothpaste with a fluoride concentration of 1,450 ppm of fluoride<sup>13</sup>



Apply fissure sealants and fluoride varnish

\*Between the ages of 2–6, higher fluoride concentration may be considered based on the individual caries risk<sup>9</sup>



## Key takeaways

Oral health is much more than just healthy teeth. The establishment of good oral hygiene behaviours early in life sets the foundation for lifelong health and well-being

Dental problems like tooth decay and gum diseases are preventable, especially when prevention starts early in life

Prevention is cost-effective and long-lasting, ensuring healthy teeth and oral health

Prevention is better than treatment. The use of products containing stannous fluoride can promote good oral health<sup>12</sup>

Paediatric dentistry offers comprehensive programs but needs consistent parental commitment for a child's dental health

There is scientific evidence to recommend oscillating-rotating electric toothbrushes to paediatric dental patients<sup>14,15,16</sup>

## References:

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### Other resources:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Protect Tiny Teeth Toolkit for Pregnant and New Moms
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2013). Committee Opinion No. 569: Oral Health Care During Pregnancy and Through the Lifespan. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 122(2 Pt 1), 417–22.

