Guardian

Simple steps to help ensure healthy smiles from an early age



Did you know that oral health has been considered a window to overall health? Poor oral health can have a detrimental effect on children's quality of life, their performance at school, and their success later in life.[1] With Guardian, oral health care can be affordable and accessible for the whole family, including its youngest for members.

Here are tips for parents to help ensure their little ones are set up for a lifetime of wellness.

Healthy smiles from the start

Taking care of a child's mouth from birth can help establish good habits and help them become comfortable with oral health care before they even visit a dentist.

Before their first tooth appears, wipe their gums with a clean, damp washcloth or gauze pad after each feeding.[2] This may help reduce harmful bacteria that can lead to future tooth decay.

Babies may put things in their mouths that can lead to accidental injuries to their face or mouth. Temporarily baby-proof your home and keep any choking hazards out of reach.

Caring for first teeth

Baby teeth usually begin to come in around six months. When they do, here's how to keep them healthy

Gently brush with a small, soft toothbrush or fingertip after meals and before bed. Graduate to a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste when the child is able to spit it out and not swallow it. Brush for them until they can do it on their own.

Begin flossing daily when a child has two adjacent teeth.

Visiting a dentist

Babies should visit a dentist within six months after teeth begin to appear and around their first birthday.



During the visit, expect the dentist to examine the child's mouth for development, look for oral injuries, discuss preventive treatment options, gently cleanse the mouth, and discuss oral health habits. As children age, x-ray exams will become necessary to track development.



Schedule the next visit before leaving to help ensure the child's oral health stays on track.

Healthy habits for kids and teens

Adult teeth begin to replace baby teeth around age six, and by age 13, most permanent teeth have arrived – it's important for kids to take more responsibility for their oral health habits at home.[2]



Brush for two minutes at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, making sure to brush every tooth.



Floss at least once a day with floss picks or string floss.



Limit sugary foods and drinks. Sugary foods, candy (especially sticky gummy candy, gummy vitamins, or fruit leather), juice, and sports drinks can erode enamel and cause cavities.

The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America

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1 Oral Health, CDC Healthy Schools – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

2 American Academy of Pediatrics, news release, Jan. 31, 2023

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