Healthy Smiles for Children with Down Syndrome

How does Down syndrome affect my baby’s teeth?

- Teeth may come in early or late.
- Baby teeth may stay in the mouth longer, sometimes until age 15, or older.
- Teeth may look smaller, or be more yellow in color.
- Gum disease is more common, so it is very important to keep teeth clean and healthy!

What can I do to keep my child’s teeth healthy?

- Even before teeth come in, clean the gums with a damp washcloth.
- As soon as the first tooth appears start brushing morning and night.
- Use a soft-bristled brush and a tiny dab of fluoride toothpaste.

It is hard to brush my child’s teeth. What should I do?

- Children with Down syndrome may be very sensitive to having their mouth touched.
- Make brushing a part of your everyday routine.
- Try an electric brush or a three-sided brush for children with special needs.
- Do what you can, stick with it and brushing will get easier.

What else can I do to prevent cavities?

- Do not share anything that has been in your mouth with your child. This can spread the germs that cause cavities.
- Never put baby to bed with a bottle or a sippy cup.
- Give healthy snacks like fresh fruits, vegetables and low-fat cheese.
- Start taking your baby to the dentist by age one for regular check-ups.

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