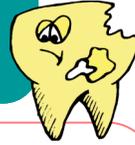


## Healthy Smiles for Mom and Me! Early Childhood Cavities



Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood—about half of children in California have had tooth decay by kindergarten, 70% by 3rd grade.

More than one-fourth of children in K-3rd grade have untreated decay.

It doesn't have to be that way—early childhood cavities (ECC), also known as baby bottle tooth decay or nursing caries, are almost completely preventable.

What is ECC? ECC is any decay in a primary, or baby, tooth. It can appear soon after the 1st tooth comes in.

Tooth decay is a bacterial infection. Children are not born with the bacteria that cause tooth decay. The bacteria/germs are transmitted from parents/caregivers to the child by putting your saliva onto anything that goes into baby's mouth—spoon, pacifier, fingers, etc.

Bacteria feed on carbohydrates in the mouth—sugars and starches—and produce acid that starts to weaken the tooth, creating a cavity.

Flip this card over for tips about preventing early childhood cavities.

Anderson Center for Dental Care  
858-576-1700 x 3745





## Healthy Eating & Snacking

Give your child veggies, fresh fruit, cheese or nuts for snacks instead of candy, crackers and other sugary or starchy things.

Limit sweets, and at mealtime only. Rinse well with water, then brush.

## Water Yes, Sugar-Sweetened No!

Water, straight from the tap to take advantage of the added fluoride, is good for your child at any age, any time of day. Begin teaching the child to use a cup at about six months.

Avoid soda pop and other sweet drinks. Use only 100% juice, from a cup, 4 ounces per day.



## Oral Hygiene

Use a baby toothbrush with soft bristles twice a day. As soon as there are two teeth touching, begin flossing between the teeth daily too.

Young children want to brush their own teeth, but they need help. Supervise and help brush until they reach 7-8, or can tie their own shoes.

## The Dental Visit

As soon as the first tooth has come in, or by age one, take baby to see the dentist. The dentist will check teeth and gums, and give you tips for keeping them healthy.



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