

# 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.

