How Can You Check Baby’s Teeth?

Each day when you clean your baby’s teeth and gums:

✅ Lay baby’s head on your lap and gently push back the lips.
✅ Look at the front and back of all upper teeth, then all lower teeth.
✅ If you see chalky white, brown or black spots on the teeth, take baby to the dentist.

What Should You Do?

Take your child to a dentist by age 1. To find a dentist:

- Ask your child’s doctor for a referral
- Ask a friend, relative, or coworker
- If you have Medi-Cal, contact Denti-Cal at 1-800-322-6384 or www.denti-cal.ca.gov
- Contact the California Dental Association at 1-800-CDA-SMILE (232-7645) or www.cda.org/PublicResources/FindaDentist
- Contact Child Health & Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program at your health department www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp

Prevent Tooth Decay in Babies and Toddlers

Do you want this?

Healthy Teeth and Gums

Healthy Child

OR

Unhealthy Teeth and Gums

Unhealthy Child

Baby Teeth Are Important!

- To Chew
- To Talk
- To Smile
- To Feel Good
- To Be Healthy
- To Save Room For Adult Teeth

Developed by California Child Health & Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program Oral Health Subcommittee
Revised 6/12/13
**What Is Tooth Decay (Cavities)?**

It is a disease that is caused by germs in the mouth.

Can start when first tooth appears (white line on tooth near gums)

Leads to pain, infection and can destroy teeth

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**How Does Tooth Decay Happen?**

Germs + Sugar = Acid → Tooth Decay

Germs eat sugar, then make acid. Acid attacks the tooth.

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**Take care of your own teeth:**

- Brush morning and before bed and floss daily
- Visit your dentist twice a year
- Limit sweet, sticky foods, sodas and sugary drinks
- Chew sugarless gum with “xylitol” after meals/snacks

**Fluoride Toothpaste (pea size)**

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**Take care of baby’s teeth:**

- Put only breast milk or formula in bottle
- Stop bottle by age one
- Take baby to dentist by age one, then every 6 months
- Ask doctor about fluoride varnish and drops/tablets

**Fluoride Toothpaste (rice grain size)**

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**GERMS**

Tooth decay germs can be passed from your mouth to your child’s mouth.

Do not share:
- Cups
- Straws
- Spoons/Forks
- Toothbrushes

Do not “clean” pacifier with your mouth.

**SUGAR**

When sugar stays on teeth, tooth decay can start, especially if your child:
- Falls asleep with the bottle
- Sips from a bottle or cup all day

Sugar hides in:
- Milk/Formula
- Juice
- Sweet drinks
- Cookies, Crackers, Chips

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