

# Healthy Smiles: Dental Tips for Young Kids

Healthy, strong teeth are important to your child's growth. They can help your child with eating, talking and smiling.

Even though baby teeth get replaced, we want teeth to be healthy until the replacement shows up. These baby teeth are holding a place for the permanent tooth.

Taking care of your child's teeth and gums is one of the best things you can do for the overall health of your child.

## Here are some ways you can help your child take care of their teeth:

- When your child's first teeth appear in the mouth use a soft washcloth to gently wipe the teeth.
- Always use a soft toothbrush that is made for children.
- Brush your child's teeth every day after breakfast and before bed time with fluoride toothpaste. Children under 2 only need a smear of toothpaste. Children ages 2 to 7 need a pea-sized amount.
- Always brush the front and backs of their teeth and the tops of the back teeth.
- Make sure your child spits out the toothpaste after brushing, but does not rinse.
- Floss your child's teeth when the teeth next to each other touch.
- Ask your dentist to show you how to floss your child's teeth.
- Wean your child from the pacifier before they are 3 but 12 months is preferred.



## Help Your Child Eat Healthy!

A good diet can lead to a healthy smile and a healthy child! Just look at what's good for your child's teeth and what's not.



### What's Good for Your Child's Teeth

Fruits, Vegetables, Lean meats (chicken and fish), Dairy foods (yogurts and cheeses), Beans, Whole grain breads, Crackers, Popcorn

Water, Milk, 100% fruit juices (limit fruit juice to 4 to 6 ounces a day)

Fill your child's bottle at night with water. Wean your baby from a bottle to a cup by the age of 12 to 14 months.

### What's Not Good for Your Child's Teeth

Cookies, Candy, Sugary foods, Potato chips, Other junk foods, Chewy Fruit Snacks

Sodas, Lemonade, Sweet teas, Other sugary drinks

Do not fill your child's bottle at night with sugar filled drinks (juice, milk, soda). These will cause cavities.

**Reward your child with hugs and smiles – not candy and treats!**

# 3 Things to Do

Now that you've learned some tips to help your child's teeth, add these 3 things to your "To-Do List."

## My To-Do List

1. Take your child to the dentist every 6 months starting at age 1! Passport by Molina Healthcare covers dental visits. If your child has not seen a dentist in the past 6 months, call today to set up a visit. Our Member Services team can help you find a dentist signed up with Passport. Just call 1-800-578-0603 (TTY: 711).
2. Check your child's teeth and gums monthly.
3. Make dental care a regular part of your child's health plan and yours. Set an example of going to the dentist, taking care of your gums and teeth and eating healthy.



## Want to learn more?

If you want to learn more about how to help your child's teeth, call us at **1-800-578-0603** (TTY: 711). We're here to help!

