

## SIP ALL DAY, GET DECAY!

SIPPING ALL DAY or ALL NIGHT LONG on juice, milk or other sugar sweetened drinks can cause tooth decay.

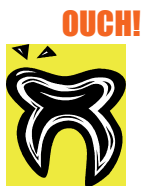
Here's how...

- ◆ The germs that cause tooth decay use sugar to grow and live.
- ◆ Sugar combines with the germs in your mouth to form plaque and acid.



◆ The acid attacks your teeth. Each acid attack lasts about 20 to 40 minutes. The acid attack starts over again with every sip.

- ◆ Frequent acid attacks weaken the white, protective outer layer. This layer is called the tooth enamel.
- ◆ Plaque is a sticky substance that forms on your teeth after eating. Plaque irritates the gums and makes them red and swollen. Brushing gets rid of plaque.
- ◆ Germs cause tooth decay when tooth enamel is damaged.



## PARENT TIP!

Do not let your child get into the habit of carrying around a sippy cup filled with milk or sugary liquids. Sipping all day long on sugary liquids can cause tooth decay.

If you want to know more about keeping your child's teeth healthy, contact the:

Office of Oral Health  
Family Health Administration  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene  
201 W. Preston Street, 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-767-5300  
[oralhealth@dhmh.state.md.us](mailto:oralhealth@dhmh.state.md.us)  
[www.fha.state.md.us/oralhealth](http://www.fha.state.md.us/oralhealth)

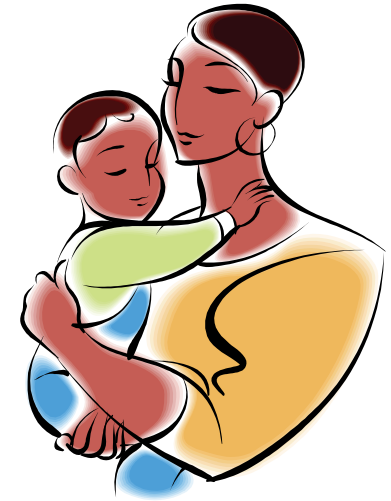


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## Oral Health Tips for Your Child



*Some healthy tips from the  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene*



Martin O'Malley, Governor  
Anthony G. Brown, Lieutenant Governor  
John M. Colmers, Secretary

## *In the Beginning*

- Before babies are born they have 20 baby (primary) teeth. These teeth develop during the fourth month of pregnancy.
- Your baby's first teeth will begin to push through the gums around 6 months of age.
- Babies usually drool and cry more when their teeth begin to erupt.



## *The Importance of Baby Teeth*

1. Baby teeth help your child learn how to talk.
2. Baby teeth make sure there is enough room in your child's mouth for permanent teeth.
3. Baby teeth are important for feeding and good nutrition.
4. Tooth decay causes infection and pain. Tooth decay can also cause baby teeth to come out early and may damage permanent teeth.

## *How to Prevent Tooth Decay*

### *For infants and toddlers...*

- ♦ Starting a few days after birth, take a wet cloth and gently wipe it over your baby's gums after each feeding.
- ♦ Never give your baby a pacifier dipped in sugary liquids like juice, honey or soda.



- ♦ If you must put your baby to bed with a bottle, make sure it is only filled with water. Wean your child off the bottle by 12 months.
- ♦ Clean your baby's teeth daily. Use a cotton swab, clean wash cloth or a small, soft toothbrush.
- ♦ If a family member has tooth decay then your baby may have a higher risk for tooth decay. It is okay to put a smear of toothpaste with fluoride on the toothbrush to reduce the risk for decay.
- ♦ Do not share eating utensils or chew food for your baby. Germs that live in your mouth can cause tooth decay in your baby's mouth.



### *For school-aged children...*

- ♦ Children under 7 years of age need an adult's help brushing their teeth.
- ♦ Only use half a pea-sized amount (a smear) of toothpaste with fluoride. Make sure your child spits out the toothpaste instead of swallowing it.
- ♦ Ask your dentist about dental sealants once your child's permanent teeth come in. Dental sealants are protective plastic coatings placed on the chewing surfaces of teeth. They prevent food from getting trapped in the grooves of teeth and causing decay.



***Children should have their first dental visit when they are one year old. They should have checkups about every six months.***

