

## How Can I Keep My Child's Teeth Healthy? Brush and Floss Every Day!



1. **Begin visiting the dentist** as early as 1-3 years of age.
2. **Use a soft-bristled nylon brush.**
3. **Hold the brush at a angle to the teeth.**
4. **Brush back and forth and in little circles 2 times each day for 3-5 minutes.**
5. **Clean all sides of all the teeth.**
6. **Brush the tongue.**
7. **Brush along with your child** while listening to a song or use a timer for 3 minutes.
8. **Use fluoride toothpaste.** A smear of toothpaste can be used for children under 2 years of age. Use a pea-size amount for children over 2 years old.
9. Floss your child's teeth once a day, beginning about 2½ years of age. **Teach them how to floss at least once a day** to remove plaque from between the teeth.
10. **Encourage your child to dry brush** while he/she watches TV.
11. **Supervise your child's brushing** until they are at least 7 years old and able to do it on their own.
12. **Replace old tooth brushes** about every 3 months, and especially if your child has the flu or a cold.
13. **If you mainly drink bottled water, be sure to buy bottled water with fluoride.** To learn more, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/bottled>, or drink tap water, which has fluoride.
14. **Provide a balanced diet**, limit sugary snacks and substitute with fruit or vegetables. Never put your baby to bed with a bottle with sweetened liquid, such as juice.
15. You should **move your child from a sippy cup** to a regular cup as soon as he/she is able.
16. **Prepare for what the dentist will do before they go.** For example, ask them to open wide, show them how to brush, have them watch the dentist during your visit.
17. **Your child should have a "dental home,"** a place to get checkups and dental cleanings every 6 months after his/her first birthday.
18. For more information, visit the following websites:
  - [www.colgate.com](http://www.colgate.com): articles about oral and dental health at any age
  - [www.ifloss.org](http://www.ifloss.org): a list of dental clinics and other dental resources
  - **American Academy of Pediatrics** for oral health resources:
    - <http://www.aap.org/commpeds/ochs/oralhealth>
  - **National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped** to find donated dental services:
    - <http://www.nfdh.org/about-us>

**We're here to help.** To learn more about UIC-Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at:

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