



Baby teeth

The ideal time for a child to visit the dentist is 6 months after the child's first teeth appear. During this initial visit, a dentist will be able to examine the development of the child's mouth.

Babies may have dental problems, such as teething irritations, gum disease, and prolonged thumb or pacifier sucking.

The sooner the child visits a dentist, the better, says the Academy of General Dentistry in offering these other tips:

- Clean your infant's gums with a clean, damp cloth twice a day.
- Ask your dentist when you may begin to rub a tiny dab of toothpaste on your child's gums. Doing so will help your child become accustomed to the flavor of toothpaste.
- As soon as the first teeth come in, begin brushing them with a small, soft-bristled toothbrush and a pea-sized dab of fluoride toothpaste.
- Help a young child brush at night. This is the most important time to brush, due to lower salivary flow during sleep and higher risk for cavities and plaque.
- By about age 5, your child can learn to brush his or her teeth with proper help from an adult.