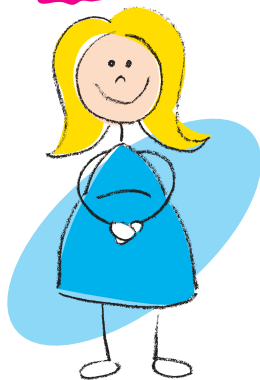


# your children's teeth

A healthy mouth is important to your child's overall health

Here are several things you as a parent can do to help...

## 1 A healthy pregnancy helps the development of healthy teeth



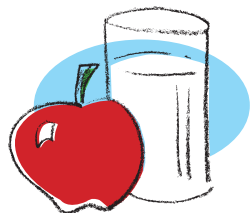
- Teeth start developing in the first three months of pregnancy
- A mother should eat nutritiously and avoid tobacco, alcohol and non-prescription drugs to ensure a healthy pregnancy
- Visit your doctor and dentist regularly

## 2 Baby teeth are very important



- The baby teeth start to erupt when a child is about six months old
- Baby teeth help your child eat and speak, and are important for overall health
- Baby teeth are also called the primary teeth and help adult teeth come in straight
- The eight front primary teeth start to fall out after age five, and the rest fall out by age 12

## 3 Healthy food makes healthy teeth



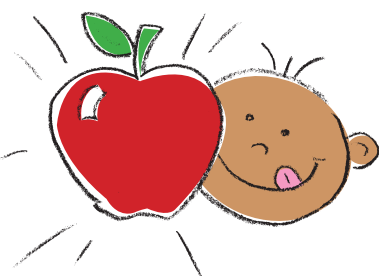
- A well-balanced diet is important for the development of healthy teeth
- Cheese, yogurt and milk contain calcium that make teeth hard and can help prevent cavities
- Between meals, choose unsweetened unflavoured milk or water instead of juice or pop
- Fresh or unsweetened canned fruits and vegetables are excellent snacks
- Whole grain crackers, bread, nuts and seeds are also good snacks

## 4 Feeding your baby

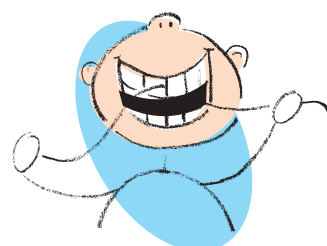


- Clean the baby's mouth and teeth following all feedings
- Avoid letting your baby sleep at the breast or with a bottle of juice, formula or milk as this can harm your baby's teeth
- If your baby normally falls asleep while feeding, brush his or her teeth before feeding
- If your baby sleeps with a bottle, fill it with water

## 5 Reduce your child's sugar intake



- Germs in the mouth called bacteria feed on sugar from foods to make an acid that harms teeth
- Fruit is the best dessert
- Limit fizzy drinks and natural fruit juices as they may contain sugar and acids that cause tooth decay
- Avoid feeding your child snacks containing sugar or sweeteners such as honey
- Save sweets for mealtimes, when they are less likely to harm your child's teeth



## 6 Brush and floss your child's teeth

- Before the baby has any teeth, the gums should be wiped with a clean soft wet cloth after every feeding
- Brushing should begin soon after the first teeth come into the mouth, so your child will get used to it
- Brushing should follow meal and snacks and sweetened medications
- Use only a small pea-sized amount of toothpaste and be sure it is never swallowed. If your child routinely swallows it, do not use toothpaste
- Once the sides of the baby teeth touch each other, flossing should take place at least once a day

## 7 Lift the lip and look

- Watch for changes in colour, lines or spots on your child's teeth as these may be signs of a potential problem
- If your child knocks out a tooth, call your dentist immediately! Gently rinse the tooth — do not brush or scrub. Wrap the tooth in a clean cloth or gauze and put it in a cup of milk and get it to the dentist immediately.

## 8 Visit the dentist



- A child should visit a dental office by the age of one year, or when the first teeth appear
- Bring your child to the dentist for regular checkups to make sure there are no problems
- Visits should continue from age two and a half when all the primary teeth are in the mouth