



# oral health fact sheet

ages 3- to 5-years-old

Baby teeth are important! They hold space for adult teeth, help chew food correctly and are important in speech development. A baby tooth with a cavity can cause pain, infection and swelling, affecting other aspects of a child's life, like sleep, attention or school performance.

## oral hygiene

age (stage)	toothbrushing	fluoride toothpaste	who's brushing?
1-3 years old	Twice a day: once after breakfast and once right before bed	Yes; use the size of a grain of rice 	Parent
Over 3 years old	Twice a day: once after breakfast and once right before bed	Yes; pea-sized amount 	Ideally, parent

After toothbrushing, spit don't rinse. The fluoride toothpaste only prevents cavities if it stays on or near the teeth. Rinsing after brushing removes the small amount of fluoride from the mouth.

## nutrition

It's not just WHAT, but HOW children eat

- Continue a healthy, whole food diet you started earlier in your child's life.
- Avoid letting your child snack on foods and sweetened beverages throughout the day. Frequent snacking of high-sugar or high-acidity foods limits our saliva's ability to protect the teeth from acid breakdown. Frequent snacking makes our teeth more likely to get a cavity.
- Provide your child with healthy, whole foods such as an apple instead of apple juice.
- Limit juice to meal and snack times. Only water throughout the day. Water that has fluoride is helpful for your child's teeth.

## routine dental care

- If you haven't already, schedule your child for a dental visit.
- Regular dental visits are recommended twice a year or every 6 months.
- Your dentist will check for decay and make sure the teeth and jaws are forming correctly.
- Sucking on a thumb, finger or pacifier can affect the growth of the teeth and jaws. These habits should end around age 3.
- You should take your child to the dentist if you notice white, brown or black spots on their teeth.
- Your child may start to get loose or wiggly teeth around 5- to 6-years old. This is the start of the transition to adult teeth! Every child is different; this process may start earlier or later than listed (Pictured below).

UPPER TEETH	ERUPT	SHED
Central incisor	8 - 12 mos.	6 - 7 yrs.
Lateral incisor	9 - 13 mos.	7 - 8 yrs.
Canine (cuspid)	16 - 22 mos.	10 - 12 yrs.
First molar	13 - 19 mos.	9 - 11 yrs.
Second molar	25 - 33 mos.	10 - 12 yrs.

LOWER TEETH	ERUPT	SHED
Second molar	23 - 31 mos.	10 - 12 yrs.
First molar	14 - 18 mos.	9 - 11 yrs.
Canine (cuspid)	17 - 23 mos.	9 - 12 yrs.
Lateral incisor	10 - 16 mos.	7 - 8 yrs.
Central incisor	6 - 10 mos.	6 - 7 yrs.

## dental emergencies

- If your child has a tooth that gets knocked out, contact a dentist right away. If you feel comfortable, replace the tooth back in the socket. If not, store it in milk as soon as possible. Believe it or not, water is not a good way to store a knocked-out tooth. Time is of the essence!
- Contact a dentist right away if a tooth is knocked loose, moved or pushed into the gums.
- If your child develops facial swelling, contact a dentist right away.

