

Your child needs healthy teeth and gums for talking, eating and smiling. There are simple things you can do to help your child have a healthy mouth now and in the future! Be a part of keeping your child cavity-free.

What you can do:

- Before your baby's teeth come in, wipe the baby's gums with a soft, clean wash cloth after each feeding.
- After the teeth come in, wipe your baby's teeth erupt, brush once in the morning and once before bedtime. Use a small smear (size of child's pinky nail) of fluoridated toothpaste. When finished, wipe off the teeth until your baby is old enough to spit it out.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle containing anything other than water.
- Healthy habits start at a young age. As your child grows and begins to eat solid foods, make sure the food you provide is healthy. A healthy diet will help your child grow and develop normally. It will also help protect your child's teeth.
- Avoid sugary foods such as candy, soda, sugary cereals and chips. Avoid sticky foods such as raisins or fruit roll-ups.
- Avoid putting things in your mouth and then putting them in the mouth of your baby. Avoid saliva-sharing behaviors such as sharing a spoon when tasting your baby's food, cleaning a dropped pacifier with your mouth or wiping your baby's mouth with saliva. The bacteria that cause tooth decay can be spread from person to person in saliva.
- Avoid saliva-sharing behaviors between children through their toys, pacifiers, etc.
- Adults can chew sugar-free gum with xylitol in it right after eating to help prevent the spread of germs to their children.

(more information on next page)

Things the Dental or Medical Providers can do:

- Dentists, dental hygienists, medical doctors and other medical providers also take care of children's teeth.
- Make sure you take your baby to the dentist by age one. Visit the dentist sooner if you have concerns about your baby's teeth or gums.
- Ask your child's dentist, medical doctor or dental hygienist about putting fluoride varnish on your child's teeth. This is another great way to protect your child's teeth from cavities.
- You and your child should visit the dentist on a regular basis or as often as your dentist recommends. Parent's teeth are important too.