



## Mouth Care for Infants and Toddlers Birth to 36 months

### Baby teeth are needed for:

- Eating/Chewing
- Talking/Speech
- Smiling/Appearance
- Healthy adult teeth

### Birth to 12 months

#### Start healthy habits early to prevent tooth decay

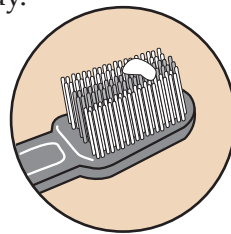
- Keep your own mouth healthy and clean to prevent spreading tooth decay to baby.
- Wipe baby's gums daily with a moist cloth before teeth come in.
- Do not put anything sweet on pacifiers/soothers.
- If bottle feeding, never allow your child to sleep with a bottle.
- Teach children to drink from a cup starting at 6 to 9 months.



*Lift the lip to see in your child's mouth daily*

#### When baby teeth start to appear

- Brush the teeth two times a day.
- Use a small, soft toothbrush.
- Use a rice grain size amount of **fluoride** toothpaste to make teeth stronger and prevent tooth decay.

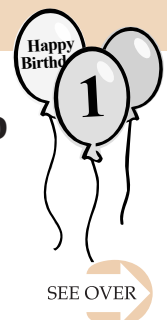


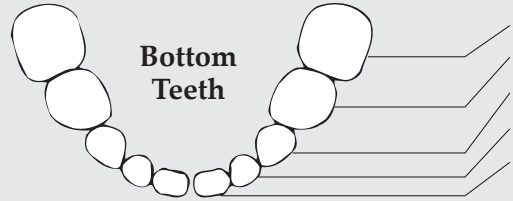
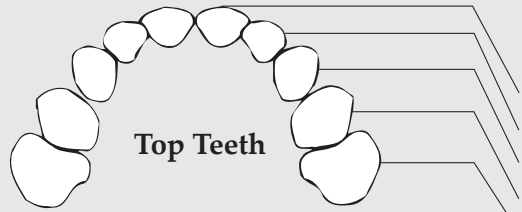
*If brushing is difficult ask another adult to help.*

#### Teething:

- May make baby or young child fussy.
- Rubbing the gums with a wet facecloth or letting your child chew on a clean, cool teething ring are good choices for teething.
- Teething biscuits, crackers or cookies may cause tooth decay.
- Check with a health professional before using teething gels, ointments or tablets.
- If baby has a fever or diarrhea when teething contact your family health providers or HealthLink BC Dial 8-1-1.

**Take your child to see the dentist by 12 months.**





Baby Teeth	When Teeth "Come In"	When Teeth "Fall Out"
Central incisors	→ 7-12 months	→ 6-8 years
Lateral incisors	→ 9-13 months	→ 7-8 years
Canines (cuspid)	→ 16-22 months	→ 10-12 years
First molars	→ 13-19 months	→ 9-11 years
Second molars	→ 25-33 months	→ 10-12 years
Second molars	→ 20-31 months	→ 10-12 years
First molars	→ 12-18 months	→ 9-11 years
Canines (cuspid)	→ 16-23 months	→ 9-12 years
Lateral incisors	→ 7-16 months	→ 7-8 years
Central incisors	→ 6-10 months	→ 6-8 years

Most children have all 20 baby teeth by the time they are 3 years old. Some baby teeth will not fall out until about age 12. Problems with baby teeth may lead to problems with adult teeth.

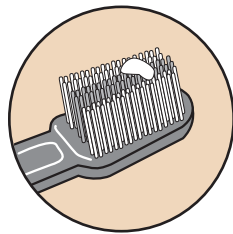
## 12 to 36 months

### Adults need to brush the child's teeth twice a day



- Keep using a rice grain size amount of **fluoride** toothpaste at this age.
- Do not give up! Brushing can be difficult.

- Make sure you see into the mouth when brushing.
- Brush where the teeth and gums meet.
- Brush all sides of the teeth and be sure to reach the back teeth.



### Healthy eating habits for healthy teeth

- Serve 3 meals and 2 to 3 planned healthy snacks a day.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods from all 4 food groups for meals and snacks.
- Offer all drinks from a cup.
- Offer only water between meals and snacks.



Sipping drinks and eating snacks all day long may cause tooth decay.

See "Feeding your Toddler 1 to 3 years" online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> for more information.

Other fact sheets on parenting your child are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

### For more information:

- HealthLink BC - Dial 8-1-1. Translation services are available in 130 languages. [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)
- or the Public Health Dental Program or a Public Health Nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health. [www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)
- VCH Parenting Website - <http://parenting.vch.ca/>
- For a video on how to brush, see [www.vch.ca/dental-health-children](http://www.vch.ca/dental-health-children), 'Tooth Brushing for children three and under – The knee-to-knee technique'

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email [phe@vch.ca](mailto:phe@vch.ca) and quote Catalogue No. FJ.100.5.M68

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