



ADA American Dental Association®

# TINY SMILES

## BABY TEETH ARE IMPORTANT



### BIRTH to 1ST TOOTH (around 6 months)

*Your baby's first smile appears even before you see the first tooth—it's all about the gums at this stage.*

#### BEST SMILE TIP!

Gently wipe baby's gums with a clean, damp, soft washcloth or gauze after each feeding. This removes bacteria and bits of food.

#### HEALTHY HABITS

You can pass cavity-causing germs to your baby, so don't put their pacifier in your mouth to clean it. And don't share feeding spoons. To clean pacifiers, rinse them with water. Never dip pacifiers in sugar, honey, or other foods.



### 1ST TOOTH to 3 YEARS OLD

*Starting around 6 months until about 12 to 14 months, your baby's first tooth will push through the gums.*

#### BEST SMILE TIP!

Once your child's teeth begin to show, brush them two times a day (morning and night). Use a baby toothbrush and a smear of fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice. Start cleaning between teeth daily as soon as your child has two teeth that touch.

#### HEALTHY HABITS

Take your child to the dentist for a first checkup after the first tooth appears or by the time your child turns 1. Do not let your child sip drinks with sugar all day.



### 3 to 5 YEARS OLD

*By age 3, your child will have about 20 teeth. These baby teeth are important. They help your child eat, speak, and smile. They also hold space for permanent teeth.*

#### BEST SMILE TIP!

Brush your child's teeth for two minutes, two times a day. Use a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste on a child's toothbrush. Assist with brushing until your child can spit out the toothpaste instead of swallowing it, usually around age 6. Keep cleaning between their teeth daily, for example, with dental floss.

#### HEALTHY HABITS

Encourage your child to eat fruits, vegetables, and foods that are low in sugar. Limit snacks, candy, juice, soft drinks, and sticky treats. And remember, water with fluoride is the best drink for your child's teeth.



Keep smiles strong at every age and every stage. Find a dentist, download brushing calendars, and get more advice for tiny teeth at [MouthHealthy.org](http://MouthHealthy.org).

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