

# Good Health Starts at Birth

## Even babies can get cavities

Cavities happen because of germs and bacteria in the mouth that stick to the teeth.<sup>1</sup>

- A cavity can occur in baby's teeth and permanent teeth.
- You can help prevent cavities if you:
  - Brush your baby's teeth with a soft brush as soon as they appear in the mouth.
  - Do not allow your baby to sleep with a bottle of milk or juice (or anything other than water).
  - Do not allow all day snacking.
  - Make brushing fun for your baby to form good habits early.

## Helpful infant tips

- Even before your baby's teeth show, you should clean the gums with a damp cloth after meals and at bedtime.
- Your doctor or dentist can teach you how to clean your baby's gums and teeth.
- Once teeth appear, you should clean them with a soft-bristled toothbrush (without toothpaste) after meals and at bedtime.
- It is good to change from a bottle to a cup between 9 and 12 months.

## Helpful sleep tips

Do not put your baby to sleep with a bottle, try one of these instead:

- Give your baby a warm bath.
- Rock your baby to sleep.
- As a last resort, allow WATER ONLY in the bottle.

## Lift the lip!

It's the best way to look at your baby's teeth for signs of trouble.

- Lay your baby on blanket on floor or your lap.
- Visually inspect your baby's teeth with a gentle lift of their lip. Move lips around to see all of the teeth.
- Call a dentist for an appointment if you see white, tan or brown spots.

With regular inspection, your child will get used to these checks of their teeth and feel less afraid of the dentist.



If you need help to find a dentist or have questions about your dental benefits, visit [www.hndental.com](http://www.hndental.com) or call:

Los Angeles County members:  
**1-844-233-4522**

Sacramento County members:  
**1-833-493-0428**

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT  
TDD/TTY users should dial  
**1-800-466-7566.**

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/about/cavities-tooth-decay.html>

Source and website:

*5th Edition Handbook of Pediatric Dentistry*. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), [www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org).

This information is not meant to replace medical or dental care. Please always follow your healthcare provider's instructions.

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