

# 5 Tips for Keeping Your Child's Teeth Healthy

## 1. Start Early!

### For babies:

- Wipe their gums with a soft cloth after feedings.
- Use a small, soft toothbrush when the first tooth comes in.

### For toddlers and young children:

- Brush twice a day.
- Use a tiny bit of fluoride toothpaste, the size of a grain of rice, till age 3 and the size of a small pea from 3-6 years.

Using fluoride toothpaste in recommended amounts is safe and effective for preventing cavities. It's OK if kids swallow a tiny amount of toothpaste until they learn how to spit.

## 2. Make It a Habit.

- Brush every day at the same times.
- Start flossing when teeth start touching each other.
- Use songs or timers to make sure they brush for two minutes.

## 3. Eat Healthy Foods.

- Cut down on sugary snacks and drinks to protect teeth.
- Between meals choose fruits, vegetables, and cheese as snacks instead of sweets and crackers.

## 4. Visit the Dentist.

- Take your child to the dentist by their first birthday.
- Keep going in for regular check-ups.
- If your child gets a cavity, ask the dentist about using silver diamine fluoride (SDF).

SDF is a liquid that can be applied with a small brush into the cavity to stop it from getting bigger.

## 5. Set a Good Example.

- Show your child how you brush and floss your teeth.
- Teach your child to spit out rather than swallow the toothpaste. They don't need to rinse their mouth with water after brushing.



For more information, contact your dentist or the 802 Smiles dental hygienist at your child's Head Start. Or visit [Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles](#).