Teeth FIRST!

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Parents: What You Need to Know About Your Child's First Dental Appointment

To make sure that your child's teeth start healthy and stay healthy, a dentist should see your baby as soon as you see a first tooth.

This first visit gives you a chance to ask questions, and it helps your baby start to recognize the dentist and dentist office as a nice place with nice people.

It also gives the dentist and you a chance to make sure your baby's teeth and mouth are healthy.

How can I prepare for the first visit?

There are many things you can do to help your child's first visit to the dentist go more smoothly.

- Schedule an appointment during a time of day when your child is usually rested and cooperative.
- Talk to your child about the visit before you go. Even if your baby is very young, it still helps to explain things.
- Build excitement by reading a book or watching a video about a visit to the dentist.
- Explain what will happen during the exam.
- Let your child pick out a special toy or blanket to bring with her to the visit.

What to expect at the first visit

- A baby's first visit to the dentist is not like when you visit the dentist. It will be more like what happens at a visit with your child's regular doctor.
- Your child can sit in your lap while the dentist faces you and looks inside your baby's mouth for early signs of cavities.
- Some babies fuss and won't sit still during their exam, and that's ok. The dentist and dental hygienist understand children and will be very gentle and patient.
- With each visit, your child will get used to going to the dentist and will be more relaxed.

Questions to ask the dentist

It may be helpful to have a list of questions with you to ask the dentist while you're there.

Here are a few things you might want to ask:

- What kinds of foods should my baby eat for healthy teeth and gums?
- How often should I brush my baby's teeth?
- Does my child need fluoride?
- Is my child at high risk for cavities?
- What can I do to prevent cavities?

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