

## Negative Effects of Refined Sugar in Children

Refined or processed sugar and foods containing refined sugars such as cookies, candies and some breads and pastas have numerous negative effects on young children. When children regularly consume refined sugars, they are at an increased risk for developing conditions such as tooth decay, obesity and behavioral issues.

### Tooth Decay

Tooth decay can begin at an early age in children. When babies or young children have prolonged exposure to sugars found in sweetened water, fruit juice, milk, breast milk and formula such as by giving a baby a bottle in bed or by sweetening a pacifier with honey or sugar, they are at an increased risk for tooth decay. When the sugar remains in the child's mouth for 20 minutes or longer the bacteria uses these sugars as food to produce acid that attacks the teeth, reports the American Dental Association. Over time, the teeth will start to decay. This also occurs in older children who regularly consume refined sugars.

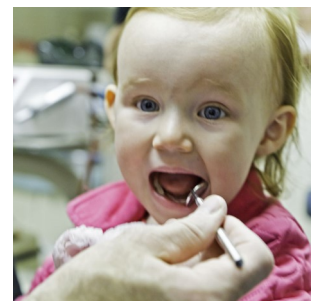
### Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is a growing problem in the United States. Refined sugars in children's diets are a leading contributor to its early onset. Overweight or obese children are an increased risk for developing chronic conditions such as heart disease, high-blood pressure, high cholesterol, type II diabetes, asthma and sleep apnea. They are also more likely to have a weight problem as an adult.

### Behavioral Issues

Refined sugar intake is a significant contributor to your child's behavior and activity levels. When your child consumes refined sugars, there is a sudden spike in blood sugar levels. Once the glucose levels begin to fall, there is a release of the hormone adrenaline – which can contribute to hyperactivity in children -- to compensate for the decrease in blood sugar. Moreover, the release of adrenaline occurs at higher glucose levels in children than in adults. As the glucose level falls below normal, hypoglycemia or low-blood sugar can occur, which can result in shakiness, sweating and altered thinking and behavior disturbances in children, reports Alan Green, M.D.

Excerpts taken from: <https://healthfully.com/495114-negative-effects-of-refined-sugar-in-children.html>



# What Is Baby Bottle Tooth Decay?

Tooth decay in infants and very young children is often referred to as baby bottle tooth decay. Baby bottle tooth decay happens when sweetened liquids or those with natural sugars (like milk, formula, and fruit juice) cling to an infant's teeth for a long time. Bacteria in the mouth thrive on this sugar and make acids that attack the teeth.

At risk are children whose pacifiers are frequently dipped in sugar or syrup. Giving an infant a sugary drink at nap time or nighttime is particularly harmful because the flow of saliva decreases during sleep.

Although baby bottle tooth decay typically happens in the upper front teeth, other teeth may also be affected.

Think baby teeth are temporary, and therefore, not important? Think again. Baby teeth are necessary for chewing, speaking, and smiling. They also serve as placeholders for the adult teeth. If baby bottle tooth decay is left untreated, pain and infection can result. Severely decayed teeth may need to be removed.

If teeth are infected or lost too early due to baby bottle tooth decay, your child may develop poor eating habits, speech problems, crooked teeth, and damaged adult teeth. In addition, the chances that adult teeth will end up being crooked are greatly increased.

The good news is that a few simple steps can help stave off baby bottle tooth decay. They include implementing good oral hygiene at an early age. Here's how:

- Wipe the baby's gums with a clean gauze pad or washcloth after each feeding.
- Begin brushing your child's teeth, without toothpaste, when his or her first tooth comes in. If you choose to use toothpaste, use a fluoride-free one.
- Clean and massage gums in areas without teeth.
- Floss once all the baby teeth have come in.
- Make sure your child is getting enough fluoride, which helps lessen cavities. If your local water supply does not contain fluoride, ask your dentist or doctor if you need to use a supplement.
- Schedule regular dental visits by your child's first birthday. Dentists also offer special sealant coatings, which can help prevent tooth decay in children.

Continue on next page...

Other techniques to help prevent baby bottle tooth decay:

- Don't fill bottles with sugar water and soft drinks. Bottles are for milk, water, formula, and special electrolyte-containing solutions when the child has diarrhea. Juices, mixed half and half with water to avoid empty calories, are a way to interest your child in a "sippy cup." **Soft drinks are not recommended for children, as they have no nutritional value.**
- Never allow your child to fall asleep with a bottle containing anything but water.
- Never give your child a pacifier dipped in anything sweet.
- Reduce the sugar in your child's diet, especially between meals.

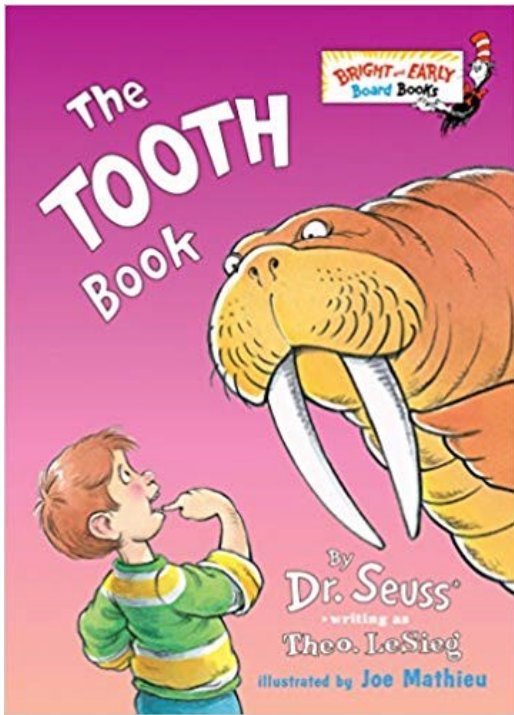
It's never too late to break bad habits. If your child drinks sweetened liquids from the bottle and/or sleeps with a bottle, break the habit now and cut the risk of baby bottle tooth decay by:

- Gradually diluting the bottle contents with water over 2 to 3 weeks.
- Once that period is over, fill the bottle only with water.

Remember that healthy baby teeth will lead to healthy permanent teeth.

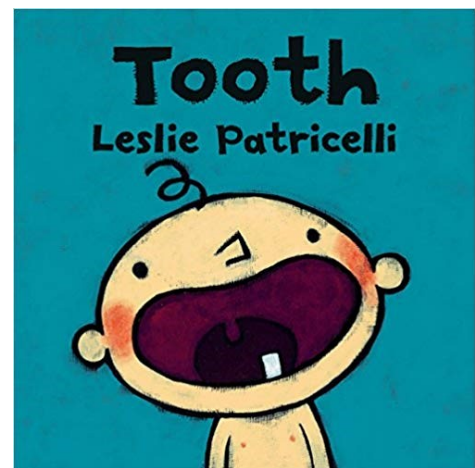
Excerpts taken from: <https://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/what-is-baby-bottle-tooth-decay#2>





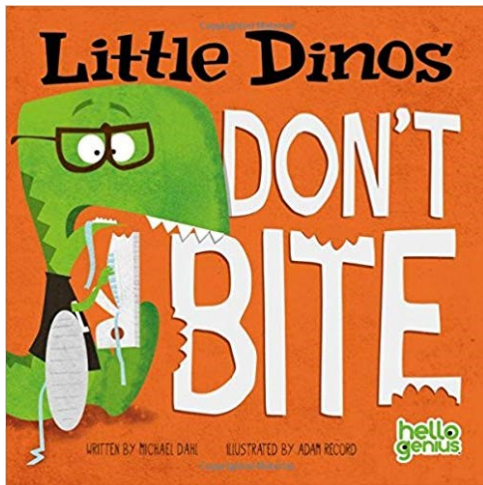
## The TOOTH Book by Dr. Seuss

Teeth—they come in handy when you chew or smile! In Dr. Seuss's hilarious ode to teeth, little ones will laugh out loud as they find out all the things teeth can do and how to take care of them so they last a lifetime! All the fun and charm of the original book are in this new board book version for the youngest readers.



*Tooth by Leslie Patricelli*

*Ouch.* Baby's mouth feels funny. Something is happening, and it's not just that a puddle of drool keeps escaping. There it is — a new tooth! And where there's one, there are soon to be more. From discovering what's good to bite (and what's not) to mastering the art of the toothbrush, Baby's dental adventure is sure to give little teething buddies something to chew on.



*Don't Bite by Michael Dahl*

Little Dino has lots of sharp teeth and starts using them to bite objects and other dinosaurs. He must learn to use them in the right way. Part of the Hello Genius series of books, this sturdy board book reinforces positive behavior, teaches good manners, and visually shows that objects and people should not be bitten.



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# Mindfulness for Parents

## Is Parenting Stressful? Ask a Parent.

Almost 3 out of 4 parents said parenting was their biggest challenge, according to *Tuning In*, ZERO TO THREE'S parent survey. Less than half of parents (48%) reported getting the support they need when they were overwhelmed.

And that matters because parenting is often stressful. Diapers to be changed, food to be prepared, worries about whether you're doing it right. You want to find a way through all the frustrating moments and be a parent who is there for your child, no matter what.

## **How Can Mindfulness Help?**

Mindfulness is one strategy that can reduce the stress of being a parent. Mindfulness is a way of being. Practicing mindfulness means paying attention to what's happening in the moment and accepting those experiences and feelings without judgment. What does that look like in the everyday life of a parent?

## Here are five ways to be mindful as you go about your day.

### **1. Listen to your child with your full attention.**

Sometimes it seems like all we do is listen to our child! But it's easy to be so focused on our own goals (like getting out of the house on time, getting dinner on the table, answering a friend's text) that we miss what our children are really trying to say. *I don't want you to leave because I love you so much! Or, I'm tired of being stuck in the stroller.* Listening with full attention helps you understand and respond to your child's needs.

### **2. Accept your child (and yourself) without judgment.**

Parenthood is exhausting. There will be many moments when you judge your child (or yourself) harshly. *Why do we have to have a battle every time we \_\_\_ (Put on a jacket. Eat carrots. Ride in the car seat.)? Why did I yell when I know that does absolutely no good, ever?* Acceptance of all feelings, even the negative ones, is important. If you can acknowledge a feeling without being overwhelmed by it, you can respond with patience, rather than react out of frustration and anger. Knowing what to expect from your child from birth to 3 years old can help you accept her feelings and behavior with more understanding.

### **3. Imagine your child's feelings and match your response.**

This strategy asks you to imagine how your child might be feeling during a difficult moment. Your 2-year-old can't find his blankie and it's time for bed! Tears and tantrums are up next! When you stop to imagine how your child is feeling, you can respond with love and compassion.

### **4. Manage your own feelings and reactions.**

Mindfulness does not mean parents never get frustrated or angry. It *does* mean pausing before reacting in stressful situations. Young children don't know how to manage their feelings yet. If you can be calm when your child is not, she learns that she can depend on you during even her toughest moments. How do you stay calm in the midst of a baby's crying, or a toddler's defiance? The first thing to do is—nothing. Pause for a moment and take a few deep breaths. This helps calm the body and clear the mind.

### **5. Show compassion for yourself and your child.**

Sometimes when young children are very upset, we forget how hard and overwhelming it can be to be so small. Thinking about a situation from a child's point-of-view helps you respond with compassion. *You really hate being buckled into your car seat! Hang on, we're almost there.* Parents also deserve compassion themselves. Instead of judging and blaming ourselves, we can stop to realize that everyone struggles and these feelings are normal. Self-compassion means recognizing that parenting is a process of learning. If your first approach didn't work the way you wanted, try something else the next time. Many people have very little experience being kind to themselves.

For additional ideas on increasing mindfulness in your daily life, please visit <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/mindfulness-in-early-childhood>.

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