

***Children who have a WV Medical Card
or CHIP Insurance have coverage for
dental exams and treatment.***

Where can I find more information about caring for my family's dental health?

The following websites have very good
information:

The American Dental Association
www.ada.org

The American Academy of Periodontology
www.perio.org

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
www.aapd.org

To locate available dental health services for
children with West Virginia Medicaid Coverage
Call: (304)-558-5388
Toll Free 1-800-642-8522
1-800-642-9704

Acknowledgements

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WV Dental Association
WV Hospital Association
WV Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
WV Academy of Family Physicians
WV Chapter, American College of Nurse Midwives
WV Office of Maternal, Child, and Family Health
WV Healthy Start/HAPI Project

Remember:

- ✓ Begin cleaning your baby's mouth the first few days after birth. Wipe baby's gums after every feeding and begin brushing baby's teeth when first tooth appears
- ✓ Don't allow your child to fall asleep with a sippy cup or bottle containing milk, formula, fruit juice or sweetened liquids
- ✓ Take your baby to a dentist by their first birthday
- ✓ Parents can pass germs that cause tooth decay. Don't put anything in your child's mouth if it has been in your mouth. Parents should brush and floss daily and have a dental exam twice a year
- ✓ A pregnant woman's dental health can also affect the health of her unborn baby. See a dentist regularly during pregnancy



**REMEMBER A LIFETIME OF
HEALTHY SMILES
BEGINS BEFORE BIRTH**



Birth Score Office



School of Dentistry

This brochure was developed by the West Virginia Birth Score-Developmental Risk Screen and Newborn Hearing Screen Program in collaboration with WVU School of Dentistry. This program is funded under an agreement with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health. 1-800-642-8522

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A Parent's Guide for Healthy Teeth



Before and After Birth



I want to have another baby, should I be concerned about my dental health during my pregnancy?

YES! Plaque is the sticky film of germs which form on teeth. It is removed by good brushing or teeth cleaning by a dental hygienist or dentist. If left on teeth this plaque spreads below the gums and causes gum disease. This gum disease may worsen during pregnancy. It also may be a cause of having a premature infant so it is very important to treat. Cavities are also a source of infection and should be treated by a dentist.

Symptoms of gum disease...

- Tender, swollen, or red gums
- Can't get rid of bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth
- Gums bleed when brushing or flossing and are a sign of infection

To prevent gum disease:

- Brush twice a day for 2 minutes
- Use fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily
- Have teeth cleaned by a dentist or a dental hygienist twice a year
- Have cavities treated by a dentist

Recent studies suggest that pregnant women with severe gum disease may be at higher risk to have a premature or low birth weight baby.

When should parents start cleaning their baby's mouth and teeth?

- Gums should be wiped after each feeding breast or bottle
- As teeth appear, an infant toothbrush and water should be used
- Starting at 18 months a smear of toothpaste can be used on the brush



Are thumb-sucking and pacifiers harmful to a child's teeth?

- Sucking on fingers or a pacifier is normal
- Sucking a thumb/pacifier stops usually between 2 & 4 years with no harm to teeth
- Thumb sucking as permanent teeth come in (around 6 years of age) is a problem
- Pacifier usage early may prevent thumb sucking



When should our baby first visit a dentist?

By age one...



Can a parent pass the germs which cause tooth decay and gum disease to their baby?

Anything which goes from a parent's mouth into the baby's mouth will spread the germs such as sharing a spoon with a baby

How can we prevent baby bottle tooth decay?

- Don't let the infant fall asleep with a bottle unless it has **plain water**
- Teach use of a cup by one year
- Wean from a bottle by 12-14 months
- Constant sippy-cup use with sugar drinks should **not** be allowed
- As baby teeth begin to appear avoid **frequent** on demand feedings during the night.