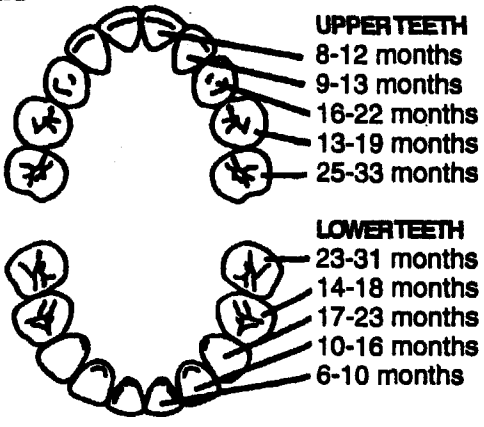
Tip Top Teeth for your 1-2 Year Old

1. When will my child's teeth come in?

- Usually baby teeth (primary teeth) start coming in around six months of age.
- All primary teeth are usually in by age 2 1/2 to 3 years. The picture shows when you can expect your child's teeth to come in.



2. Why is it important to take care of baby teeth?
Baby teeth do six important things:

- Let your child chew food.
- Help your child speak clearly.
- Guide the permanent teeth in place.
- Aid in jaw and facial formation.
- Add to your baby's good health.
- Make a pretty smile!

3. When and how should I clean my child's teeth and mouth?

- Start your child learning how to brush his/her teeth by showing him/her how to hold the brush. Use a small, soft toothbrush and just a smear of fluoridated toothpaste.
- Because your child cannot brush his/her teeth very well, you should brush his/her teeth every day.

4. What is dental plaque?

- Plaque is a sticky film on the teeth that contains bacteria and germs. It forms daily in the mouth and cannot be seen.
- Plaque germs use sugar as their food. Even a very small amount of sugar is enough for plaque germs to produce acid. It is this acid that attacks the enamel of the tooth, causing the tooth to decay.

Brush babies teeth

5. What is dental decay (caries)?

- If plaque is not removed and allowed to stay on the tooth, the acid will finally burn a hole in the enamel.
- Once decay starts, it will continue until the decay is treated.
- Dental decay can be prevented by regular tooth care.

6. What is "nursing bottle mouth" or "baby bottle tooth decay"?

- Tooth decay in infants and children is called baby bottle tooth decay. It can destroy the teeth. Most often it occurs the upper front teeth, but other teeth may also decay. Baby bottle tooth decay is caused by the infant drinking from a bottle of formula, sugar water, fruit juice, or a breast during naps or bedtime.

7. To prevent baby bottle tooth decay:

- Use only plain water if you give your baby a bottle to get him/her to sleep.
- Start teaching your baby to drink out of a cup as soon as he/she can hold a cup.

8. When should I take my child for his/her first dental visit?

- The earlier the better-usually around the child's first birthday-but if you notice a problem with a tooth, go to the dentist immediately.

9. What kind of food should I give my child?

- Offer a healthy diet to maintain good dental and physical health.
- Encourage your child to eat a variety of foods.
- Provide nutritious snacks that are low in sugar.

Focus on Fluoride Varnish

When your child leaves today, his/her teeth will be coated with the fluoride varnish and will not look as bright and shiny as usual. They will look nice tomorrow when the varnish has had time to wear off, leaving its protective effect.

To retain the varnish on the teeth as long as possible and to achieve the best result:

- Your child should eat soft foods for the rest of the day.
- Teeth should not be cleaned until tomorrow morning.
- In the morning, the mouth and teeth should be cleaned as usual.

Thank you for bringing your child here today!

Into the Mouths of Babes Oral Health Project, January 2001
Thank you to the N.C. Smart Smiles Project for allowing us to revise their materials.