

## The First Year

Your baby's first year of life is a time of growth. Here are some tips for those first teeth.

### How to brush:

- Before your baby has teeth, clean the mouth with a washcloth every day.
- Start cleaning baby teeth as soon as they come in. Use a baby toothbrush with a smear of toothpaste that has fluoride in it.

### Other tips:

- Don't share spoons, cups, or toothbrushes with your baby. Adults can have germs in their mouths that can cause cavities in babies' teeth.
- If you put your baby to bed with a bottle, fill it with water only. Milk, formula, juices, soda, and breast milk all have sugar in them that can puddle around a sleeping baby's teeth. This can cause tooth decay.
- If you have well water, talk to your doctor about getting it tested for fluoride.



## What is a Fluoride Application?

Your child's doctor, dentist, or dental hygienist can put fluoride on your child's teeth as soon as they appear in the mouth.

- Fluoride varnish is a clear protective coating applied to the outside of teeth. It stays on for one day and gives your child benefits for months to come.
- Fluoride varnish helps to prevent and even stop decay that has already started.
- Fluoride varnish is safe, painless and quick to apply.

### After fluoride varnish is applied:

- Do not brush your child's teeth today.
- Start brushing your child's teeth tomorrow.
- Do not feed your child hard, sticky or hot food.

## Healthy Smiles for Life

Tips for protecting the little smiles you love



For more information visit  
[FROMTHEFIRSTTOOTH.ORG](http://FROMTHEFIRSTTOOTH.ORG)



MaineHealth

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Did you know kids with tooth decay in their baby teeth are more likely to get cavities in their permanent teeth? They are also more likely to have tooth loss later in life! Here are some tips for protecting your child's teeth.



SMEAR (BIRTH-3 YEARS)



PEA (3-6 YEARS)

## 1-2 Years Old

**Time to get ready for your child's first dental check! Here are some tips for caring for teeth when your baby is 1-2 years old.**

### How to brush:

- Brush baby's teeth twice a day. Use a baby toothbrush with a smear of toothpaste that has fluoride in it. A smear is the size of a grain of rice.

### Going to the Dentist:

- Your baby should have a first dental check by age 1. Schedule a visit with a dentist or ask your medical doctor to look at your child's teeth.

### What about fluoride?

- Ask your baby's medical doctor about a simple fluoride application.

### Other tips:

- Wean your baby from the bottle by age 1. Now your baby should be drinking from a sippy cup with water only. Limit juice to meal times.
- Check your baby's mouth for spots and stains on the teeth.

## 2-3 Years Old

**Work on regular brushing to help save that smile! Here are some tips for caring for teeth when your baby is 2-3 years old.**

### How to brush:

- Brush your child's teeth twice a day. Use a baby tooth brush with a smear of tooth paste that has fluoride in it. A smear is the size of a grain of rice.

### Going to the Dentist:

- Schedule a visit with your child's dentist.

### What about fluoride?

- Ask your child's medical doctor about a simple fluoride application.

### Other tips:

- Limit juice drinks to 4-6 ounces per day (about half a cup). Most fruit juices have a lot of sugar that can cause tooth decay.



## 3-6 Years Old

**Your child is learning how to do many tasks for themselves. Let brushing be one of them! Here are some tips for caring for teeth when your child is 3-6.**

### How to brush:

- Let your child start learning to brush their own teeth, but be there to help. Kids aren't expected to brush properly until they are about 6-8 years old.
- Use a pea sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride in it.

### Going to the Dentist:

- Schedule a visit with your child's dentist.

### What about fluoride?

- Ask your child's medical doctor about a simple fluoride application.

### Other tips:

- Limit juice drinks to 4-6 ounces per day (about half a cup). Most fruit juices have a lot of sugar that can cause tooth decay.

