

# Taking care of your baby's teeth.



See your dentist regularly.

## The beginning of a lifetime of good dental health.

### Daily Dental Care

Tooth decay can be greatly reduced by a daily home dental care plan that starts as soon as the teeth break through the gums. Brushing after every meal with a soft toothbrush, using a tooth paste that contains fluoride, flossing, and limiting foods that are high in sugar all help keep teeth and gums healthy.

Young children like to brush their own teeth and should be allowed to practice to let them learn the skill. You should help with the brushing in the morning, and at bedtime to ensure that the child's mouth is free of all food pieces before they sleep. A "pea sized" amount of toothpaste, containing fluoride, should be used at each brushing. Toothbrushes should be replaced when necessary. Bent and frayed bristles cannot clean teeth well. Once the baby molars are in, floss any teeth that contact adjacent teeth twice daily.

### Snacking

You can contribute to strong and healthy teeth by watching what your child eats. Children generally need to snack, so give your child milk, cheese, whole grain crackers, fruit or vegetables, rather than sweet foods such as chocolate bars, gum, raisins and sweet drinks. If your child does have a sweet, sticky snack, make sure teeth are cleaned afterward, especially at bedtime.

### Fluoride

Fluoride will reduce the amount of tooth decay that children experience. It can be found in the water supply or in most toothpastes, or can also be applied in the dental office.

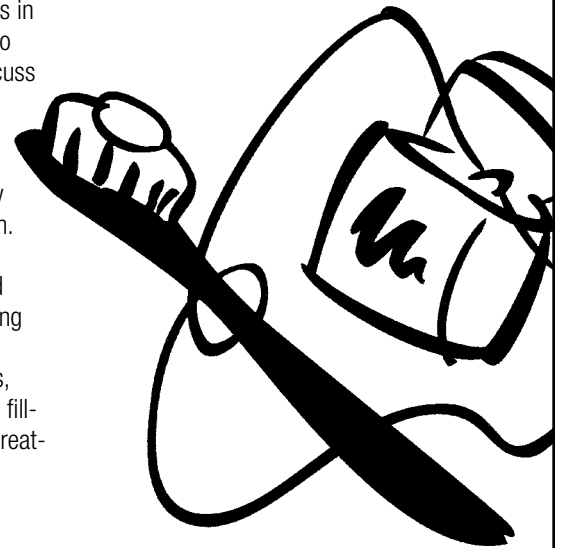
The amount of fluoride necessary for your child depends on their age, whether your community's water supply is fluoridated, and their dental condition. Fluoride levels in the water supply vary from community to community in Manitoba. You should discuss this with your dentist.

### Sealants

The dental team can help prevent decay by applying sealants to your child's teeth. A sealant is a clear or shaded plastic material that is painted on the teeth and acts as a protective barrier to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth, where tooth decay most often occurs. In many cases, sealants effectively prevent the need for fillings. Discuss this important preventive treatment with your dentist.

By practicing good dental care habits at home, and by keeping your appointments for regular dental checkups, you can help your child have a beautiful smile that lasts a lifetime.

For more information about caring for your baby's teeth, talk to your dentist. We care about you and your teeth.



This information courtesy of your Manitoba Dentist