

Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles



Visiting the Dentist by Age 1

Tooth decay can be prevented or managed if children have dental visits early—ideally by their first birthday—and if parents take good care of their child’s teeth between dental visits. The age 1 dental visit is key for building a lifetime of good oral health. Dental visits for children can be simple, and staff can tailor them to be “kid-friendly.”



The goal of the first dental visit is to make the experience welcoming and pleasant. The dental clinic staff may ask you to sit in the dental chair and hold your child in your lap. Or staff may use the knee-to-knee position to look into your child's mouth.

During the visit, dental clinic staff may:

- Describe what they'll do and ask you if you have any questions
- Use a small mirror to look in your child's mouth for any problems, such as tooth decay
- Check your child's bite and jaw growth to make sure they're developing correctly
- Clean your child's teeth and apply fluoride varnish to prevent tooth decay
- Give tips on brushing your child's teeth and how much fluoride toothpaste to use
- Discuss ways to feed your child to prevent tooth decay
- Offer tips for preventing injuries to your child's head, face, and mouth, and what to do if an injury occurs



.....

This document was supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$7,582,500 with 97% funded by ACF and 3% by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of, nor are an endorsement by, ACF/HHS or the U.S. government. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.

National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. 2022. *Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles: Visiting the Dentist by Age 1*. Washington, DC: National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety.



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



National Center on
Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety