Government of **Western Australia**
North Metropolitan Health Service
Dental Health Services

My Child's First Dental Visit

Your child's first dental visit is a way to meet the dental team in a non-threatening and friendly way. Ideally take your child for a dental check-up before they turn 2 years of age, especially if you think there may be a problem.

Why take my child for an early visit?

- It will help your child become familiar with the 'sights, smells and sounds' of the clinic
- To check for tooth decay and any other dental conditions. It is best to find out about any problems early
- Find out the best ways to help your child have a healthy mouth.

How can I prepare my child?

- Take time to play 'dentist' at home by counting teeth or reading books.
- Take your child with you when you or older siblings go for a dental check-up.
- Be positive about the appointment and don't pass on any fears you may have.
- Avoid words that may frighten your child, such as 'hurt' or 'needle'. The dental staff have special words to explain these to your child.
- Make the appointment when child is well rested and as an accepted part of a regular routine, not a 'special event'.
- Come early to an appointment to become familiar with the new surroundings and complete any forms.

What will happen at the first visit?

- With your help the dental staff can build trust and confidence in your child and let them have a positive dental experience.
- Do not worry if your child is not keen to have a dental check, the dental staff will have ways to make your child feel comfortable. For example, the first check-up may be done with your child sitting on your knee.
- It's necessary for the dental staff to capture your child's complete attention. Please don't think that you are being ignored if they talk to your child instead of you.



Where can I take my child for a dental check-up?

- Your child's health professional can also perform a dental assessment called 'Lift the Lip' on your child at 12 months, 2 years of age and as part of their school entry health assessment and will refer your child if there is a concern.
- Children aged 4 years and under may attend any government adult dental clinic for dental care if the parent is eligible (holds a Health Care or Pension Card). Those in country locations, without access to a government clinic, may access subsidised general and emergency treatment through participating private dentists using the Country Patients Dental Subsidy Scheme (CPDSS). If your child is not eligible, your child should visit your family dentist.
- Children aged 5-16 years or up to completion of year 11, can attend the School Dental Service for free general dental care.
- Contact Dental Health Services on (08) 9313 0555 or visit www.dental.wa.gov.au for more information.

Would you like more information or to provide feedback?

This document can be made available in alternative formats such as braille, audio tape or electronically on request.

Communications Officer, Dental Health Services
Locked Bag 15, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983
(08) 9313 0555
publications@dental.health.wa.gov.au
www.dental.wa.gov.au

Any images used in this document are for illustrative purposes only, as they are only offered as a general guide.

CONSUMER REVIEWED

HealthyWA Health information for Western Australians

© 2019 Dental Health Services WA. All rights reserved.

V 10/19

Other signs of tooth problems may include:

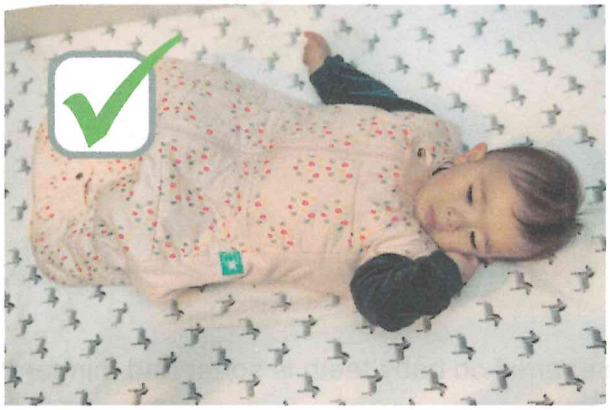
- Crying when having hot or cold foods/drinks
- Not chewing or biting hard foods
- Trouble sleeping and/or changes in behaviour and general unhappiness

Remember decay is not always painful and symptoms may come and go.

Tooth decay is more likely to happen in children who ...

- Do not have clean teeth
- Suck on a dummy dipped in a sweet substance such as honey
- Have a diet high in sugar such as sugary drinks and snacks
- Fall asleep sucking on a baby bottle or 'comfort suck' on bottles/pop-tops containing drink other than water throughout the day
- Have parents or caregivers with poor dental health, and who continually pass on the decay causing bacteria via their saliva





How can I help prevent tooth decay in my child?

- Breastfeed or feed baby and put them in bed without a bottle. If they need a bottle for comfort provide only cooled, boiled water in the bottle
- **Replace the bottle with a cup** when your child is 6 to 12 months old
- When your child is 12 months and over give tap water when thirsty
- Provide healthy meals and snacks for healthy teeth and body
- **Clean your childs teeth** in the morning and before bed at night
- Ask for sugar-free medicine
- Make an appointment with your child health professional for an oral health assessment of your infant's mouth and start dental visits before their 2nd birthday

Too much sugar in the diet effects both general and dental health.

Would you like more information or to provide feedback?

This document can be made available in alternative formats such as braille, audio tape or electronically on request.

Communications Officer, Dental Health Services
Locked Bag 15, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983

(08) 9313 0555

publications@dental.health.wa.gov.au

www.dental.wa.gov.au

Any images used in this document are for illustrative purposes only, as they are only offered as a general guide.

CONSUMER REVIEWED

HealthyWA Health information for Western Australians

© 2019 Dental Health Services WA. All rights reserved.

V 04/19