



They're just baby teeth, right?

Have you ever had a toothache while trying to work on something, and at the same time tried to stay in a good mood? It's difficult, isn't it? For young children with tooth pain, the experience is even worse because they usually do not know the right words to describe their pain. Instead, they often act out with poor behavior. Even worse, children with chronic pain get so used to it, they do not know life without it. They go to sleep with pain and wake up with pain. It affects their energy levels and even how they feel about themselves.

A recent study found that 28 percent of pre-school children have had cavities. About 40 percent of children entering kindergarten have cavities, and the number is growing.

Long-lasting effects from chronic tooth pain

- The brain develops quickly during the earliest years. Children who have continual toothaches are in a constant state of "fright or flight." Over time they may eventually show the same signs as a child who has lived with long-term abuse and neglect.
- Recent studies have linked untreated cavities with Type II diabetes, heart failure and even death due to brain abscesses (infections) that began in the mouth.
- Children—and adults—with rotten teeth and swollen gums smile less. They often end up feeling poorly about themselves and avoid making new friends.

What to do?

- Before your baby has any teeth, clean her mouth after each feeding with a clean, wet cloth, wiping gums and mouth. Continue to gently clean gums and teeth as they emerge.
- For children over 2, a pea-size amount of toothpaste (ADA approved) on a small, soft bristled brush should be used. Follow it up with a little floss! Cleaning the teeth, at least twice a day and especially at bedtime, is important for a happy smile.
- Children need fluoride. If you are unsure about how your child gets fluoride, ask your dentist, doctor or public health nurse.
- Eat nutritious meals and snacks. Germs and food with a lot of sugar are two things that cause cavities in young children.
- Avoid putting your child to bed with anything but water. Sugary drinks can pool around the teeth and cause tooth decay.



Bring your child to the dentist by age 1!

Dentists have special tools to remove germs before decay sets in. It is their job to keep mouths happy and healthy. If you have an appointment and cannot make it, call and reschedule. When your child has an appointment, that time is set aside for their care.

For more information, contact:

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