



Chapter Three: Toddler

A-B-C, 1-2-3, brush and floss with me!

By their third birthdays, toddlers should have a full set of primary teeth. Proper oral hygiene is not only a collaborative activity with parent and child but fundamental for good oral health.

Home Care

Toddlers are still developing their manual dexterity. To help them with their oral hygiene, parents should facilitate tooth brushing by positioning their heads for stabilization and visibility. A round buffing technique should be exercised for two minutes, at least three times daily. A youth toothbrush should have soft bristles on a small head and the handle should be long and equipped with a non-slip easy grip. After the age of two, a pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste can be used and children must be taught to spit after brushing. Flossing should be coupled with brushing, which is especially important before bedtime because saliva levels drop when we sleep. Consult with your dentist as needed.

F is for Fluoride: How much does your child need?

What? Fluoride is a naturally occurring chemical compound that helps prevent dental decay.

Where? It is found in drinking water, toothpaste and certain mouthrinses. It may be also be applied at your dental visit.

When? At the age of two, with adult supervision, kids should brush with a pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Consult with your dentist about your child's cavity risk and particular fluoride need.

Fluoridated water is one of the greatest advancements in cavity prevention. Instead of bottled water, offer your children filtered or boiled tap water. Inquire with your local government officials about the fluoride content of your water supply and be sure to inform your dental provider if your family has lived in areas of varying fluoridation.



Soothing Habits

Finger sucking, pacifier use and other self-soothing behavior are often carried into the toddler years. Depending on the intensity, duration and frequency of the habit, it may impact jaw growth and even the position of the later erupting adult teeth. Be sure to discuss concerns regarding self-soothing with your child's pediatrician and dentist.

Emergency

Play time is for fun but sometimes children get injured. In the event of facial trauma, be sure to have your child evaluated by a healthcare professional. Baby teeth may become loose or even lost from injury so it is important to inform the dentist of such incidents. Childproofing your home can help minimize potential hazards and supervised play is always recommended.

Special Needs

Children have a variety of needs. Pediatric Dentists are specialized in the treatment of children as well as adults with developmental challenges and other special needs. Be sure to consult with your child's healthcare providers to learn about the best options available for your family. Contact your insurance company and other social services in your area to secure the most convenient course for treatment to meet the needs of your child.

Dental Visits

By their first birthday or the eruption of their first tooth, children should have a dental exam. Periodic exams are recommended every six months and cleanings are encouraged for children by age three. Depending on your child's cavity risk fluoride treatments may be provided. Inquire with your dentist about diet, nutrition and oral care guidance to help maintain good oral health for your child. For more information on oral care for your family, visit brightwhitesbydrwhite.com.

[Watch our Toddler Oral Care Video](#)