



Chapter Two: Baby

A Healthy Start

Caring for a new baby is a huge task. Good oral care for babies is essential between feeding and sleeping. Establishing this rhythm early on can help maintain good oral health throughout childhood.

Newborn Gum Care

Your baby's gums and newly erupting teeth should be wiped with a moist cloth after feedings and before naps. A baby wash cloth is an ideal choice but a baby soft toothbrush can also be used with a light round massaging technique. Be sure to clean your hands before and after cleanings. Don't forget to also wipe under the tongue and inside the cheek. Milk often collects in these areas.

Co-sleeping and baby cavities

When nursing overnight, milk pools around your baby's gums and newly erupting teeth. Because saliva decreases when we sleep, wiping the gums and toothbrushing is especially important before bedtime.

Self-Soothing

A natural calming agent for babies, self-soothing has many benefits. However, after the age of two, the palate begins to expand laterally and along with the position of teeth can be adversely affected by thumb and finger sucking. In some cases, this can result in an open bite. Be sure to consult with your pediatrician and dentist about your child's growth and how to stop such habits.

Teething

Although some children are actually born with teeth, your baby's first tooth should typically erupt around six months. Introduce a strong elastic, BPA free, medical grade silicone teether to help ease teething pain. See our **BrightWhites Tooth Eruption Timeline** to see when to expect your child's next tooth.



First Dental Visit

With the eruption of the first tooth, babies should have routine dental visits every six months. A lap exam not only secures your child but allows adequate visibility for the dentist to examine the teeth and soft tissue attachments. While a cleaning may not be done before the age of two, this visit allows parents to discuss any oral care concerns.

What to Expect at the First Dental Visit:

Just like all other baby activities, dental appointments should be routine. It's natural for parents to be a little nervous about their baby's first dental visit. There will be fears and likely a few tears, but this visit is a very important step as an initiation to good oral care. Try to avoid scheduling the appointment during nap or feeding times. The appointment will be short and sweet but it is an important time for parents to inquire about their child's newly erupting teeth and how to best care for them.

Home Care

Your baby's oral hygiene routine begins with you. Wiping the gums and brushing your baby's new teeth is encouraged after meals and before naps, generally three times daily. Tap water is adequate but a fluoride **free** baby toothpaste is helpful in establishing a routine. Brushing for two minutes in a round buffing motion is desired. It is natural for babies to be uneasy during brushing but over time, they will grow accustomed. Discuss any concerns with your dentist. For more information on oral care for your family, visit brightwhitesbydrwhite.com.

[Watch our Baby Oral Care Video](#)