CHILDREN'S TEETH AND DENTAL HEALTH

Tooth decay in children is on the rise in Australia. More than half of all 6-year-olds have some decay in their baby or adult teeth. So, it's more important than ever to teach your child good oral health habits that will stay with them for life.

CARING FOR CHILDREN'S TEETH IS IMPORTANT

It's important to look after your child's teeth from the moment they start teething. Keeping your child's teeth and gums clean will protect against infection, cavities and pain. Decayed baby teeth can damage the permanent teeth underneath.

If a child loses a tooth due to decay, it can cause crowding problems when their adult teeth come through later.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD'S TEETH CLEAN

Help your child to brush and floss their teeth from the time they get their first tooth until they are 7 or 8. After that, supervising them is still important.

Children should brush twice a day using a soft-bristled toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of children's fluoride toothpaste from the age of 18 months. Make sure they brush for at least 2 minutes and remind them not to swallow the toothpaste.

Children should floss as soon as they have 2 teeth that are in contact with each other. You should supervise flossing until they are about 10.

To develop strong teeth, make sure your child eats a healthy, balanced diet and avoids foods with a lot of added sugar, such as lollies, biscuits and soft drinks. Choose fluoridated tap water when possible.

VISITING THE DENTIST

Regular dental check-ups are important from the age of one, or within 6 months of the first tooth appearing.

Always make a visit to the dentist a positive experience. Never use the dentist as a threat for not brushing teeth or other behaviour.

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