10 Simple Ways

You Can Protect Your

Baby's Smile

Tips for Parents

☺ ☺Cavity Risk Checklist ☺ ☺

Help finding a dentist

Cavity Risk Checklist

Is Your Baby Protected from Cavities?

		Yes	No
1.	I check my child's teeth for spots or problems at least once a month.	☐	☐
2.	My child had or will have regular dental screenings starting by age one.	☐	☐
3.	My child takes fluoride drops or a tablet daily, or drinks fluoridated water.	☐	☐
4.	I brush my child's teeth or clean my baby's gums every day.	☐	☐
5.	My child has sweet drinks and foods only for special occasions or with meals.	☐	☐
6.	My child finishes the bottle or nursing before going to bed.	☐	☐
7.	My child stopped or will stop using a bottle by age one.	☐	☐
8.	My family avoids sharing toothbrushes.	☐	☐
9.	I help my children under age six with brushing their teeth.	☐	☐
10.	I brush and floss my teeth and visit the dentist regularly.	☐	☐

Give yourself 1 point for each question you answered "yes."

8-10 points: Keep up the good work!
Practice all "10 Simple Ways" to protect your baby's smile found in this brochure.

0 - 7 points: Your baby is not protected from cavities.
Practice the "10 Simple Ways" in this brochure to protect your baby's smile and make a dental appointment for your child.

Help Finding a Dentist

Don't know where to find a children's dentist?

Try these resources -

PCCY
Public Citizens for
Children and Youth   www.pccy.org

Child Health Watch Helpline

215-563-5848, ext.17

cap4kids

Children's Advocacy Project

www.cap4kids.org/philadelphia

Physical Health Handout – Dental Listing

10 Simple Ways You Can Protect Your Baby's Smile

1. Lift the lip

Babies change quickly, so it's important to lift your baby's lip and look for changes on your baby's teeth monthly. If you notice white or brown spots on the teeth or anything unusual, phone your baby's dentist or ask your baby's doctor.

2. Start dental check-ups by first birthday

All babies should have their teeth checked by a dentist or doctor by the first birthday. Start regular dental checkups at an early age to help keep your baby's teeth healthy.

3. Protect your baby's teeth with fluoride

Fluoride is a mineral that helps make teeth stronger and better able to fight cavities. Ask your baby's dentist or doctor about fluoride varnish applications. If your tap water is not fluoridated, check with your baby's doctor or dentist to see if your child will benefit from fluoride drops or tablets.

4. Brush daily

Clean your baby's teeth every night before bed. The younger you start, the easier it is to develop the habit. You can place your child's head in your lap to allow for enjoyable and effective brushing.

Clean infant gums and first teeth with a moist cloth or small soft toothbrush. For babies with more teeth, use a small (rice grain size) bit of fluoridated toothpaste on a soft toothbrush.

5. Limit sugar and frequent snacking

Bacteria that cause cavities feed on sugars and starches. This includes crackers, pretzels, juice, pop and candy. Offer healthy foods at planned meal and snack times; limit eating in-between.

Limit juice and save soda-pop for special occasions.
Offer water at other times when your child is thirsty.

6. No bottles in bed

Formula, milk, juice and breast milk cause cavities when left in your baby's mouth while sleeping. If you must give your baby a bottle in bed, fill it with plain water.

7. Wean from bottle to cup by one year

Begin offering a sippy cup at 6 months; wean from the bottle by age one.

8. Don't share toothbrushes

Cavities are caused by bacteria. Bacteria are passed to babies through saliva. Avoid sharing toothbrushes with your baby. Regular brushing and dental care for you and your children can help lower the risk of spreading cavity-causing bacteria.

9. Help children brush up to age six

Pay attention to bedtime brushing and encourage brushing after breakfast as well.

10. Take care of yourself

Your children learn by watching you. Show them that you value a healthy body and a healthy smile. Brush and floss your teeth, make regular dental visits and take good care of yourself.