

# A Child's First Visit to the Dentist



The Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (APD) recommends that your child's first visit should coincide with when the first tooth comes in, usually between six and twelve months of age.

## Why so early?

According to the APD, the most important reason is to begin a thorough prevention program because dental problems can begin early. A big concern is Early Childhood Caries (also know as baby bottle tooth decay or nursing caries). Your child could risk severe decay from using a bottle during naps or at night or if they nurse continuously from the breast.

## An important early start for a lifelong healthy smile

Professional evaluation, intervention, and treatment by a dentist are important components of maintaining good oral health. A dentist can check for tooth decay and assess your child's

oral growth and development. A dentist can also teach you how to properly clean your child's teeth, determine if your child has any fluoride needs, and evaluate the potential effect of any harmful habits such as thumbsucking. This visit is also a good opportunity to initiate a positive and productive relationship that can provide the foundation for a lifetime of good oral health.

The earlier the dental visit, the better the chance of preventing dental problems. Children with healthy teeth chew food easily, learn to speak clearly, and smile with confidence. Start your child now on a lifetime of good dental habits.

For more oral health information, please visit our Web site at [www.decare.com](http://www.decare.com)

Sources: The Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: [www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org).

