



ORAL HEALTH CARE BASICS

Infants & Children

***This information sheet in no way constitutes medical or dental advice. Always consult your Hemophilia Treatment Center (HTC) or Hematologist's office before seeking any treatment.**

Poor oral health can lead to serious dental issues requiring extensive dental treatment. To prevent cavities and gum disease, good oral hygiene routines should be established as early as infancy and continued throughout life. Children with bleeding disorders should receive personal and professional dental care in order to maintain healthy teeth and gums. Proper prevention goes a long way!

Planning Dental Visits:

- Children with inhibitors and ports may require extra planning or antibiotics for dental care.
- Tell your HTC or Hematologist office nurse about upcoming dental visits to determine if your child will need any special preparation.
- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends a first dental visit at 6 months of age or earlier if you have concerns.
- Schedule dental visits at a time when your child is likely to be well rested and cooperative.
- A pediatric dentist will have more training in treating children with special needs, however, many general dentists enjoy treating children.
- During a routine dental visit, your oral health professional will check for cavities in the primary teeth and watch for developmental problems, as well as help to create a positive dental experience.
- Your child may receive a fluoride treatment or application of sealants to prevent decay.

Infants

- Even before teeth begin to erupt, thoroughly clean your infant's gums with a wet infant washcloth.
- When baby's teeth begin to erupt, brush them gently with a small, soft-bristled toothbrush
- Use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste equal to the size of a grain of rice.
- If the water supply that serves your home is not fluoridated, discuss water testing and supplements with the dentist and dental hygienist.
- Expect a simple lap exam and dental health education.

Toddlers

- At age two or three, you can begin to teach your child proper brushing techniques.
- Use a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Remember, you will need to follow up with brushing and gentle flossing until age seven or eight, when the child can do it alone.
- Change your child's toothbrush three to four times a year, and **after every illness** to avoid bacteria and germs.
- Never allow children to share toothbrushes.

Tips

- Offer fruits and vegetables as snacks instead of candies and cookies & limit snacking between meals.
- Sweet treats can be offered at the end of a meal followed by tooth brushing.
- Encourage your child to drink water. Avoid sweet drinks such as juice and soda that cause decay.
- **Never put baby to bed with a bottle.**
- Don't share your saliva on spoons or straws with your baby.
- Set a good example for your child by brushing, flossing and eating healthy foods, and scheduling regular oral health visits for yourself. Make dental visits a family event.