

0-2 years old



Strong teeth are a great start to your baby's overall health, helping them to eat well, speak well and have a bright smile.

From birth, taking care of your baby's gums and teeth will set them up with a healthy mouth for life.

As soon as a child's first tooth appears, they are at risk of tooth decay.

DHF
Dental Health
Foundation
Ireland

You can help your baby avoid tooth decay and gum disease with daily healthy habits.

Tooth Tips

- After feeding and before bed, wipe gums with a clean damp cloth to remove bacteria and sugars.
- To relieve teething discomfort like feeding, irritability and tender gums offer a cold teething ring or rub gums with a cool damp cloth.
- When the first tooth appears (around 6 months) clean with a soft brush and water twice daily. Avoid toothpaste unless advised by your dentist.
- Visit your dentist by your baby's first birthday.

Diet Tips

- Breastmilk, formula and cooled bottled tap water in the baby's bottle. Unflavoured water and milk are the most tooth

friendly. Avoid adding juice, fruit drinks, sugar etc., to the bottle or food as sugar triggers decay.

- When your baby starts on solid food, begin to wean off the bottle, and encourage drinking from a sippy cup (around 6 months). Choose healthy low sugar snacks between meals.
- Read labels for sugar content. Less than 5g per 100g of sugar is a low sugar.

Things to Consider

- Using a bottle after 12 months increases the risk of tooth decay, as does dipping a soother in honey, jam, or anything sweet.
- Avoid letting your baby sleep with a bottle in its mouth to limit sugars and bacteria.
- Some medications have high sugar content. Ask your pharmacist for a sugar-free option.