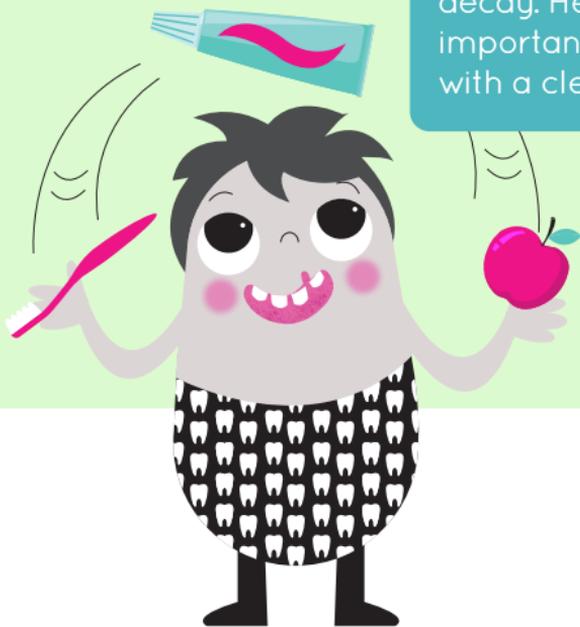


Cleft Lip and/or Palate

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 child's gums and teeth will set them up with a healthy mouth for life.

As soon as a child's first tooth appears, starting a good oral health routine through regular brushing can prevent decay. Healthy teeth are very important for children born with a cleft.



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

Tooth Tips

- Start tooth brushing as soon as the first tooth appears.
- Supervise brushing until at least 7 years of age. Help brush difficult to reach areas in the mouth. Encourage your child to spit out, not swallow any remaining toothpaste. Don't rinse the mouth after brushing.
- Use a smear (rice sized amount) of 1450ppm fluoride toothpaste as soon as the teeth erupt. This is recommended for children with cleft due to a high risk of tooth decay.
- From 2 years of age, increase to a pea-sized amount.
- Brush teeth for 2-3 minutes twice daily, before bed and in the morning. Change the toothbrush every 3 months or when the bristles are worn.
- Visit your dentist by your child's first birthday and then every 3-6 months as advised by your dentist.

Diet Tips

- Choose healthy snacks between meals and limit occasional treats to mealtimes.

- Babies should only receive breastmilk or formula from a baby bottle. For formula-fed babies, supplementary drinks of cool boiled water can be offered by bottle in the first 4 months of life.
- When your baby starts spoon-feeding, begin to wean off the bottle and encourage drinking milk and/or water from a beaker or open cup (around 6 months of age).
- Avoid giving juice, fruit drinks and fizzy drinks – sugar in sweet drinks triggers decay.

Things to Consider

- Children with a cleft lip and/or palate are at a higher risk of tooth decay.
- Avoid letting your baby sleep with a bottle in its mouth, as even milk can increase the risk of tooth decay.
- Regular soother use is usually discouraged for children with cleft. Please discuss with your cleft team.
- Some medications have a high sugar content. Ask your pharmacist for a sugarfree option.