

## CHECKING A CHILD'S TEETH

Use one of these positions to look at teeth



- Get in a position where you can see inside the child's mouth, especially the back of the teeth.
- Two suggestions include sitting on the floor with the child in your lap (above left), or sitting knee-to-knee with a partner (above right), with the child across both laps.
- These positions work well because an adult can hold the child's hands if necessary for better cooperation.
- Gently lower child's head into your lap.
- Lift the lip and quickly assess child's oral condition.

## FLUORIDE

- Fluoride is a natural mineral that helps prevent tooth decay.
- Fluoride is like any other nutrient; it is safe and effective when used appropriately.
- Community water fluoridation is a great way and inexpensive way to prevent tooth decay.
- Children should brush daily with a toothpaste containing fluoride, once they can spit.

## FLUORIDE VARNISH

Fluoride varnish is a decay fighter that can be used to help prevent or stop tooth decay. Fluoride varnish is a thick liquid that is painted on the teeth with a small brush. An all over application takes only a few minutes. Fluoride varnish is safe, effective and easy to apply. The varnish dries on the teeth immediately.

## LEARN MORE

For more information go to [www.mocoh.org](http://www.mocoh.org)



# Show me your smile!



The oral health crisis in the United States is a silent epidemic. Oral disease is the number one childhood disease; it is 5 times more common than asthma. Oral disease is progressive and becomes complex if not treated. Oral disease can be prevented! Education is key to reducing the oral disease epidemic in Missouri.

## ORAL HEALTH MATTERS

Need a reason to brush and floss? A healthy mouth may help you fight off overall health problems. An unhealthy mouth, especially if you have gum disease, may increase your risk of serious health problems. It is important for you to understand the importance of oral health — it affects your overall health.

### AFFECTS ON ADULTS:

- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Uncontrolled diabetes
- Low birth weight premature babies

### AFFECTS ON CHILDREN:

- Pain
- Lack of desire to eat and malnutrition
- Inability to learn and develop properly
- Lower self-esteem

## NUTRITION AND EATING RIGHT

- Provide your child a healthy diet
- Limit soda and sweets
- Avoid sticky foods
- Provide healthy snacks from a variety of food groups



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# Stages of tooth Decay:



**HEALTHY MOUTH**  
No obvious dental problems. Uniform white tooth surfaces. Pink, firm gums.



**EARLY DECAY**  
Early signs of cavities appear as lesions. Lesions can appear as white spots, opaque or cloudy. Lesions appear as bands along the gum line.



**MODERATE DECAY**  
Brown or black discolorations on teeth. Broken teeth and/or teeth that are wearing down. Child's teeth may be sensitive to hot or cold.



**SEVERE DECAY**  
Multiple, large cavities. Cavities often accompanied by gum abscesses. Pain not be present if nerve is already damaged.

## PRENATAL

Did you know a mother's teeth and gums' health could affect her baby's health? Women with severe gum disease have 7 times the risk of delivering a premature and/or low birth weight baby. What can you do?

- Visit your dentist.
- Tell your dentist you are pregnant so your oral health can be monitored.
- Brush at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.
- Repair decayed teeth and treat gum disease.
- Drink plenty of water and eat nutritious meals and snacks.

## WHY ARE BABY TEETH IMPORTANT?

BABY TEETH:

- Guide permanent teeth into place
- Help your child speak clearly
- Aid in jaw and face formation
- Chew nutritious food
- Promote overall health
- Build self-esteem

## WHEN WILL MY CHILD'S TEETH COME IN?

Primary teeth start coming in around six months of age, and all 20 primary teeth are usually in by age 2 or 3 years. When babies are teething, let them chew on something cool like a clean, cold cloth or a teething ring.

Signs of teething:

- Sore gums
- More drooling
- Fussy and irritable

Upper Teeth	Erupt	Shed
Central Incisor	8-12 Months	6-7 Years
Lateral Incisor	9-13 Months	7-8 Years
Canine (Cuspid)	16-22 Months	10-12 Years
First Molar	13-19 Months	9-11 Years
Second Molar	25-33 Months	10-12 Years

  

Lower Teeth	Erupt	Shed
Second Molar	23-31 Months	10-12 Years
First Molar	14-18 Months	9-11 Years
Canine (Cuspid)	17-23 Months	9-12 Years
Lateral Incisor	10-16 Months	7-8 Years
Central Incisor	6-10 Months	6-7 Years

## BACTERIA

Bacteria can be passed from person to person. To reduce the risk of bacteria transfer:

- Parents should practice good oral hygiene
- Parents should avoid sharing eating utensils with a child
- Parents should not put a pacifier in their mouth before giving it to a child. This does not clean the pacifier!

## 5 WAYS TO PREVENT EARLY CHILDHOOD CAVITIES

- 1 IT'S NOT THE BOTTLE, IT'S THE BEVERAGE** – Don't allow your child to fall asleep with a bottle or sip cup filled with anything but water. As long as your infant is taking the bottle or nursing, wipe the gums and teeth after each feeding
- 2 LIMIT SUGARY DRINKS BETWEEN MEALS** – Around age 1, wean your child from the bottle and teach drinking from a regular cup. Make milk and juice available at meal and snack time only, so a child isn't "sipping" on these throughout the day. Give your child water in between meals and snacks.
- 3 PROVIDE BETTER NUTRITION CHOICES** – It's not just what children drink, but what they eat! Many popular snacks, such as fruit roll-ups and gummy fruit snacks, contain extra sugar that coats the teeth. Even dried fruit, with natural sugars, can get stuck in and between tooth surfaces, making teeth harder to clean.
- 4 CREATE GOOD ORAL HYGIENE HABITS** – After feeding clean your baby's gums with a damp washcloth or gauze. As soon as baby teeth appear, begin brushing teeth gently with soft child-size toothbrush and water or training toothpaste (one that does not contain fluoride until they can spit). Brush your child's teeth at least twice daily, especially before bedtime.
- 5 SET A GOOD EXAMPLE** – Children will imitate what they see. That's why it's important for parents to make oral hygiene a priority. Brush and floss teeth daily and schedule regular dental visits for you and your child.

## DENTAL DECAY IS PREVENTABLE!

- Never let your child go to bed with a bottle.
- Brush your child's teeth daily, especially before bed.
- Use a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste, once your child can spit.
- Help children brush their own teeth.
- To develop good brushing habits, brush at the same time every day.
- Start gentle flossing when two of your child's teeth begin to touch.
- Check child's teeth monthly for changes.
- Replace the toothbrush when your child has strep throat, recurring sore throats, or when bristles are worn.
- Set a good example by practicing good oral hygiene.
- Visit the dentist regularly beginning at age one.