

# For kids, healthy habits that start early will last a lifetime.

Give your kids the advantage of smart dental habits from the very start. Here are some helpful tips about preventive care for children, from infancy through adolescence.

## **Bottle Feeding**

After bottle feeding, always use a damp washcloth or gauze to gently clean your baby's mouth. If your baby sleeps with a bottle, don't fill it with anything except water.

## **Cleaning and Brushing**

Start cleaning your child's teeth with water as soon as they begin to come in. For children under two, brush their teeth with a light smear of toothpaste on a soft child's toothbrush. At two to three years, use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. Once children reach six or seven years of age, they can begin brushing their own teeth, with parent supervision.

## **Flossing**

Once your child's teeth begin to touch each other, a toothbrush won't be enough to reach the spaces between teeth — that's when you start flossing. Children should be able to floss their own teeth at age 10.

## **First Dental Appointment**

Schedule your child's first dental appointment at around six months of age, or whenever teeth begin to come in. Our staff will do everything possible to make your child's first visit to the dentist a fun, enjoyable experience. Children receive a thorough examination, including x-rays and risk assessments, to create a personalized dental care plan for immediate and long-term needs. Most children receive a cleaning, depending on the dentist's assessment and recommendations. Your child's dentist may recommend sealant, a coating to protect deep grooves in the back teeth from the bacteria and acid that cause cavities.

Find out more about your oral health at [www.WillametteDental.com](http://www.WillametteDental.com)

## **What to Watch For**

Keep an eye out for white or brown spots on your child's teeth — these could be signs of decay. Also look for signs of redness and bleeding in the gums. If you notice either of these symptoms, talk to your child's dentist.

## **Eating Habits**

Strictly limit your child's intake of sugary foods and drinks like sodas, cookies, and candy — these are not only bad for your child's overall health, but especially bad for teeth. Even some healthy foods that are good for your body may not be good for teeth. For example, raisins and other dried fruits are very sugary and they stick to your teeth, so be sure your child brushes immediately after eating them.

