

Preparing for Your Child's FIRST DENTAL VISIT



When should I take my child for their first dental visit?

Book an appointment within six months of the eruption of their first tooth or by their first birthday, as recommended by the Canadian Dental Association.

Why so early?

As soon as baby teeth appear, they can get cavities. It is important to take care of baby teeth because they are needed for eating, talking, smiling, self-esteem and holding space for adult teeth.

Early childhood caries (ECC) is a severe form of cavities in the baby teeth of children up to six years of age. ECC can lead to pain, difficulty eating and sleeping, high cost for dental treatment, higher risk of cavities in adult teeth, lost school days for your child, and lost work days for you.

By taking your child for their first dental visit by their first birthday, you will learn how to take care of your child's teeth. Also, dental problems may be found early and treated. This can help prevent ECC.

What can I expect?

The dentist or dental hygienist will:

- Check your child's teeth for cavities and other dental problems
- Check that the jaws and teeth are developing properly
- Talk to you about your child's risk for cavities
- Apply fluoride varnish depending on your child's cavity risk
- Show you how to care for your child's teeth
- Discuss proper nutrition to prevent cavities
- Discuss feeding practices and oral health
- Set up the next appointment before you leave

First dental visit by first birthday



Tips for parents

- Make a morning appointment when your child is more likely to be rested and cooperative
- Try “playing dentist” with your child before the visit. Have your child practice opening their mouth while you count their teeth. Read a story about going for a dental visit
- Make a list of questions to ask the dentist, such as teething, pacifier use, thumb and finger sucking, or any other questions you may have
- Offer your child a light meal so they won’t be hungry; clean their teeth before the visit
- Save snacks for after the visit so there is no food on their teeth during the exam
- Let your child bring their favourite toy
- Be positive and treat this appointment as a normal routine visit

If you have some concerns about the visit, your child may pick up on this. A simple calming practice is for you to take some deep breaths for a few minutes while holding your child chest-to-chest.

Can't afford dental care?

Your child may be eligible for **FREE** dental coverage through the **Healthy Smiles Ontario** program if they are 17 years of age or under.

To speak with the York Region Public Health Dental Program, call 1-800-735-6625 or visit york.ca/dental for more information..



If you have any other health questions or concerns, call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653; TTY 1-866-512-6228

PUBLIC HEALTH

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