

BONUS TIP:
Take care of
yourself, too!

One of the best things you can do for your baby is to take care of your own teeth.

Regularly visit a dentist for a dental checkup. If you are told you have cavities, have them treated as recommended by your dentist. Your untreated cavities can pass germs to your baby.



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Your Baby's Precious Teeth are at Risk for Decay Starting with the First Tooth.



When baby teeth have decay, it is called Early Childhood Caries or ECC. ECC is an infectious disease.



ECC is the most common chronic childhood disease. It is a serious health problem.



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Where do babies get the germs that cause ECC?

Probably from you or someone that takes care of your baby. Germs can be passed by simple things like tasting baby's food or letting baby put his hands in your mouth.



Are you passing germs to your baby? Take this quiz to find out.

1. Do you pre-chew your baby's food? Yes No
2. Do you test the temperature of your baby's bottle with your mouth? Yes No
3. Do you lick your baby's pacifier or bottle nipple to clean it? Yes No
4. Do you share cups, forks or spoons with your baby? Yes No
5. Do you let baby put his hands in your mouth or others' mouths? Yes No

If you answered YES to any of these questions, your baby may be at risk for ECC! Schedule a dental appointment for your baby, and take him to the dentist. The dentist will check his teeth and tell you how to properly care for them.

Did you know?

If ECC is not treated by a dentist early, it can cause severe pain and swelling in the mouth, face and neck. In extreme cases, serious operations are the only way to stop baby's dental pain and suffering.

Good news: You can help prevent this from happening to your precious baby.

(Pictured: 3 year old child having a serious operation because of severe ECC.)



Protect your baby's teeth with these five easy tips:

- 1 Wipe your baby's mouth, gums and teeth after every feeding (including after breastfeeding or bottles) and at bedtime with a soft, wet cloth. Once your baby gets teeth, brush them with an infant toothbrush with a smear of fluoride toothpaste. Your baby should be weaned from the bottle before or shortly after her first birthday.
- 2 Skip sweet drinks, including juice. You can start offering your baby water at six months from a bottle or a cup. Your baby should be weaned from the bottle between 12 and 15 months.
- 3 Put your baby to sleep by rocking her or rubbing her back instead of using the bottle.
- 4 Stick to healthy foods and snacks for your baby. Babies don't need sweet snacks or desserts like cookies, cake and candy.
- 5 Give your baby a good gift for her first birthday: a visit to the dentist! The dentist will check her teeth and help you keep your baby's mouth healthy.

Children 2 and younger only need a smear of toothpaste on their toothbrush.

