

Breastfeeding and Baby's Teeth

- ☞ Breastmilk is the most natural and nutritious food for an infant.
- ☞ Health Canada recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months.
- ☞ Breastfeeding helps baby develop a strong jaw and healthy teeth.
- ☞ Breastfed infants are at a lower risk of developing early childhood tooth decay but they are not free from developing decay.



Did You Know...

Breastfed babies need Vitamin D drops to help develop healthy teeth.



- ☞ Tooth decay happens when teeth are exposed to liquids and solids containing sugars for long periods of time.
- ☞ All milk, even your breastmilk, contains sugar (lactose).
- ☞ Breastmilk alone has a low chance for causing decay, but once other foods and drinks high in sugar are added to the diet the chance for decay is much greater. ¹
- ☞ Baby teeth have thinner enamel which puts them at more risk for decay.

Taking Care of Baby's Teeth

- ☞ Use a clean damp cloth to wipe baby's gums daily.
- ☞ Brush baby's first tooth with a soft toothbrush and water.
- ☞ Child's first dental visit should be by their first birthday.
- ☞ "Lift the lip" at least once a month to check for decay. Chalky white lines along the gum line could mean the beginning of tooth decay.

References:

1. Erickson, PR., Mazhari, E. Investigation of the role of human breast milk in carries development, *Pediatr Dent* 1999; 21(2): 86-90.

Did You Know...

Fruit drinks (punch, crystals, juice) and pop have the same amount of sugar!

1 cup fruit drink = 7 teaspoons sugar



1 cup pop = 7 teaspoons sugar



This is too much sugar for baby! Instead offer small amounts of water after 6 months.

For more tips on how to prevent early childhood tooth decay, talk to your public health nurse, doctor, or your dental professional.