Eating and Drinking Habits

- Frequently exposing your child’s teeth to sugar will cause cavities.
- Don’t let your baby sleep with a bottle containing anything but water.
- Avoid frequent use of a sippy cup or bottle that contains anything but water.
- Plan to wean your baby from the bottle and sippy cup by 18 months of age.
- Children should consume no more than 120 ml to 175 ml of juice daily.
- Fresh fruits, vegetables and cheese are the best snacks.
- Avoid allowing your child to snack on crackers, cookies, dried fruit or fruit snacks.
**Caring for Your Child’s Mouth**

- Baby teeth are important for chewing, smiling, talking, jaw development and self-esteem.
- Good oral health begins with parents because cavity-causing bacteria inside the parents’ mouths can pass to babies.
- Visit your dentist for regular checkups and keep your own teeth healthy.
- Don’t share with your baby things that have been in your own mouth (e.g., utensils, food, etc.).
- Look inside your child’s mouth. Check teeth daily for white, brown or black spots.
- Brush your child’s teeth with fluoride toothpaste.
- Begin brushing with a ‘smear’ of fluoride toothpaste after the first tooth comes in.

**Development of the Child’s Mouth**

- All children are different, and the age at which their teeth come in varies.
- Typically the first tooth is seen at 6-10 months of age.
- Most children will have all 20 primary teeth by 3 years of age.

**Advice for Teething**

- Discomfort and fussiness is considered normal during teething.
- Eruption cysts, which look like blood blisters on the gums, may appear with teething. They will often get larger, then smaller, usually healing on their own.
- Children’s acetaminophen can be given to the baby every 6 hours to relieve acute pain.
- A chilled washcloth or teething rings may help alleviate pain.

**Habits that Affect the Mouth**

- Thumb-sucking and the use of pacifiers is normal and acceptable. However, frequent and vigorous sucking can deform your child’s developing mouth.
- Plan to wean children from digit-sucking or pacifiers by 3 years of age.
- If the habits persist, ask a healthcare professional what can be done.

**Mouth Injuries**

- Accidents involving the teeth and mouth are very common in this age group.
- Some injuries can be prevented by padding household furniture (e.g., coffee tables, etc.) when children are small.
- If a baby tooth is knocked out, do not put it back in the child’s mouth. At this age, teeth placed back into the mouth generally do not take and may cause problems later with the permanent teeth.

**Fluoride Recommendations**

- If you use powdered baby formula, it is recommended that you mix it with non-fluoridated water.
- A ‘smear’ of fluoridated toothpaste is all that is needed for children under 3 years of age.

**Upper Teeth**

- **Central incisor**: Erupt 8-12 mos., Shed 6-7 yrs.
- **Lateral incisor**: Erupt 9-13 mos., Shed 7-8 yrs.
- **Canine (cuspid)**: Erupt 16-22 mos., Shed 7-8 yrs.

**Lower Teeth**

- **First molar**: Erupt 13-19 mos., Shed 7-8 yrs.
- **Second molar**: Erupt 25-33 mos., Shed 7-8 yrs.
- **Central incisor**: Erupt 6-10 mos., Shed 6-7 yrs.
- **Canine (cuspid)**: Erupt 17-23 mos., Shed 9-12 yrs.
- **Lateral incisor**: Erupt 10-16 mos., Shed 7-8 yrs.

**For children younger than 3 years of age, use a ‘smear’ or ‘grain-of-rice sized’ amount of fluoridated toothpaste.**

**For children aged 3-6 years, use only a ‘pea-sized’ amount.**