

UNITED CONCORDIA® DENTAL

Protecting More Than Just Your Smile®

# baby book OF ORAL HEALTH

Third Edition



# Baby Book of Oral Health for

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_



Place photo here to show  
through window in cover

# Your baby deserves the healthiest start possible.

United Concordia Dental is happy to provide you with this *Baby Book of Oral Health* to record those important dental milestones, such as your baby getting their first tooth. This book also contains information about a mother's oral health, care of the baby's mouth and teeth, and information about what you can do to make sure you both have a healthy mouth.

Oral health is an important part of your baby's overall health, so you should take steps now to ensure a lifetime of healthy smiles. This book will show you how, and help capture special memories along the way.



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# Healthy Smiles

## Start with Mom

**M**otherhood brings many new responsibilities. Oral healthcare may not be the first responsibility that comes to mind, but it's especially important before, during and after pregnancy. Changes in hormones can increase an expecting mother's chance of gingivitis, for example. And her oral health can affect her baby in good ways and bad. Many studies link maternal gum disease to premature labor and low birth weights.

Babies can pick up cavity-causing bacteria from their moms after birth, too. That's why it's so important for moms to maintain good oral care. Follow these tips to keep your mouth healthy before and after the birth of your baby:

- Visit your dentist regularly.
- Make sure your diet is rich in calcium, phosphorus and essential vitamins. You can find these nutrients in broccoli, oatmeal, milk, spinach and other foods.
- Avoid sugary foods and drinks.
- Brush and floss daily.



Place an ultrasound picture  
or pregnant belly photo here.

Healthy teeth in the making!

# Nothin' But Gums

## Oral Care in the First Months



**E**ven though baby teeth are temporary, they play important roles in facial development, chewing and speech. They also act as a guide for permanent teeth, helping them emerge in the right positions.

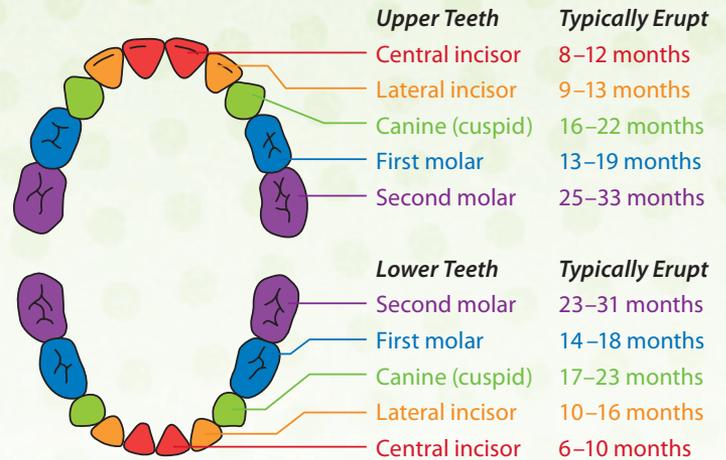
You should start caring for your baby's mouth even before teeth begin to show. Here's how:

- Use a soft cloth or gauze sponge to wipe your baby's gums.
- Prevent the transfer of bacteria to your baby's mouth by never using your own mouth to clean pacifiers or test bottle temperature. Also avoid sharing silverware.

# Baby's First Teeth

**A**round six months, your baby's teeth will start to break through the gums. (This is also called tooth eruption.) The chart to the right shows a typical eruption pattern but your child's pattern may vary. If a tooth hasn't erupted within four to six months of these averages, don't worry. Your dentist may just want to check that the tooth has formed in the jawbone.

## PRIMARY TOOTH ERUPTION TIMETABLE



## Tooth Eruption Chart

Use this chart to record the date of your child's tooth eruption.

Upper  
Teeth

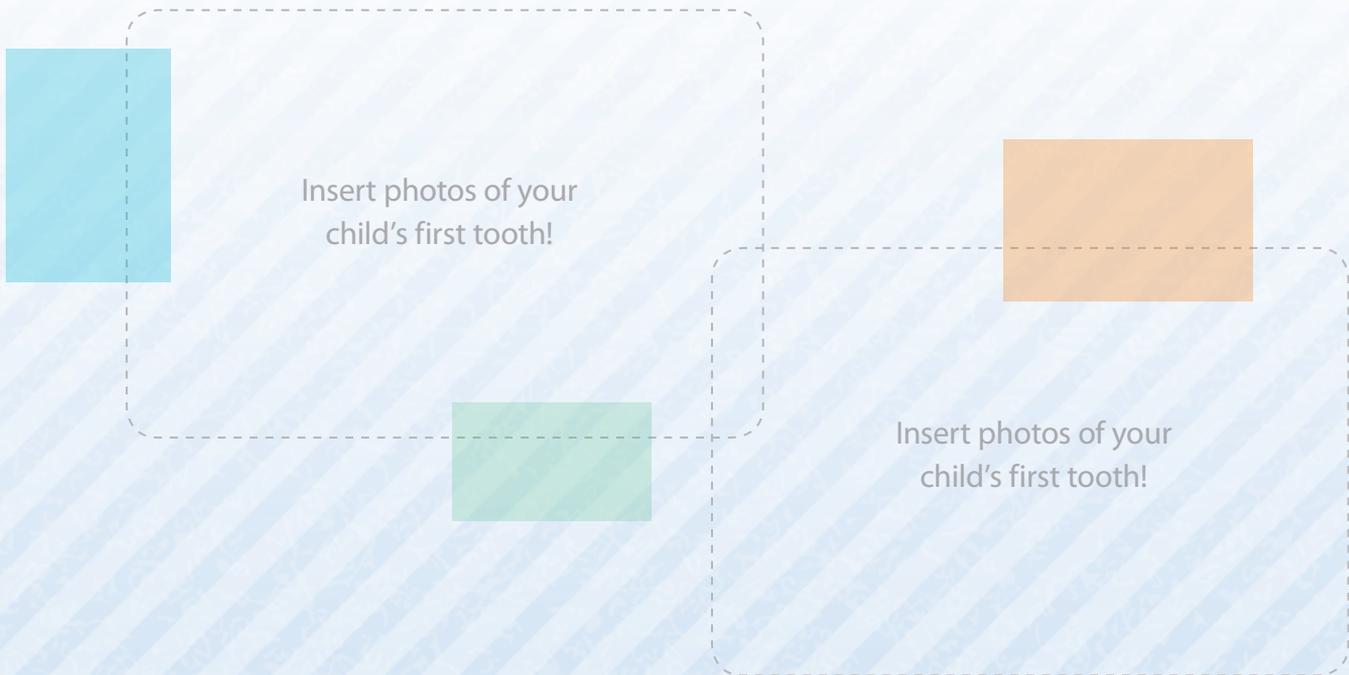
Lower  
Teeth

# Baby's First Teeth

## Teething Tips

**Y**ou've probably heard of teething pain. Many babies experience discomfort as their teeth start to break through the gums. During these times, your baby may become fussy, chew on toys or hands, and even drool more than usual. This is all normal.

If your baby becomes excessively fussy, work with your doctor to determine the cause and find ways to lessen teething discomfort.



# Caring for **Baby Teeth**

**Tooth decay is the most chronic childhood disease in the United States. But it can be reduced or even prevented with good oral care.**

**S**ugar, carbohydrates and plaque (a sticky substance that adheres to tooth surfaces) are the main causes of tooth decay. The risk of decay rises when sugar and carbs are consumed often, and when they remain in the mouth for long periods of time. Reduce this risk and keep your baby's teeth healthy by following these tips.

## **DO ...**

Brush baby teeth at least once a day

Inspect your baby's teeth regularly

Limit sugary foods and drinks

Encourage the drinking of milk and water only

Try to break the bottle habit as soon as possible

Schedule baby's first dental checkup by age 1

Consider having your baby's molars sealed

## **DON'T ...**

Put baby to bed with a bottle

Dip pacifiers in sugary substances

Clean pacifiers by mouth

Share silverware or other utensils

## **Check Out Those Pearly Whites**

It's fun to watch your baby's teeth come in. But don't just look for new ones. Examine your baby's teeth and mouth regularly, checking both the front (lip and cheek side) and back (tongue side). Pay special attention to the gum line, and look out for chalky areas where the tooth and gum meet. This is one of the first signs of tooth decay, and if you spot it, you should take your baby to the dentist as soon as possible.

Insert a photo of your child's pearly whites!

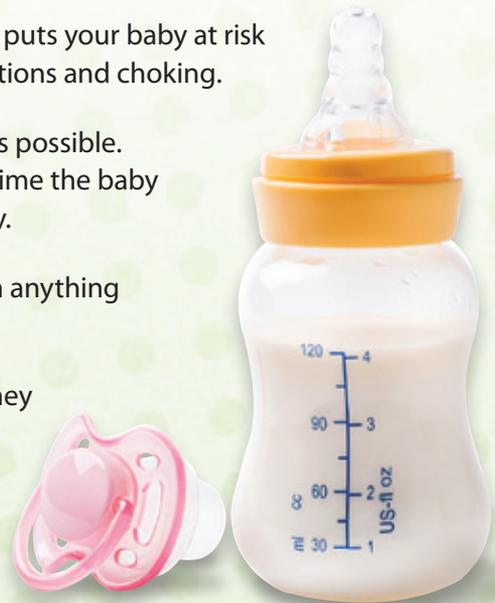
# Early Childhood Caries

Infants are at risk of developing decay when sugars and carbohydrates are consumed at greater frequency and remain in the mouth for longer periods of time. When this happens, baby teeth decay at a very rapid rate, leading to early childhood caries.

Baby Bottle Syndrome, a common cause of early childhood caries, is caused by putting a baby to bed with a bottle of milk or juice or other sweet liquid. The liquid lies in the baby's mouth and pools around the teeth. The result is extensive tooth decay and infection that can be very painful. It can be so severe that many of the teeth have to be capped or even removed to avoid infections.

To prevent your child from developing early childhood caries, follow these guidelines:

- Clean the baby's gums after feedings and before bedtime.
- Never put your baby to bed with a bottle. Doing so puts your baby at risk for tooth decay, and can also lead to inner ear infections and choking.
- Try to break your baby of the bottle habit as soon as possible. A good rule to follow is to start using a cup by the time the baby is six months old, but no later than the first birthday.
- If your baby uses a pacifier, do not coat it or dip it in anything containing sugar, such as honey or syrup.
- Avoid sugary foods and drinks during the day. As they get older, good snacks include bread sticks, fruit, vegetables, dry cereal and unsweetened juice.
- Encourage the drinking of milk and water only.



# Tooth Decay

## Spotting the Early Warning Signs

It is important to know how to spot the early signs of tooth decay in your baby. Tooth decay is the most common dental disease of children.

### *Are Your Child's Teeth Healthy?*



#### **Healthy Teeth**

Healthy teeth should be all one color and mostly smooth around the edges.



#### **Moderate Decay**

A yellow or black band on the tooth's surface closest to the gumline may indicate progression to decay.



#### **Severe Decay**

Teeth that look brownish or black with unsmooth edges may indicate advanced decay.

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# Baby-Friendly Brushing

**S**tart brushing as soon as your baby's first tooth breaks through the gum, using a baby-friendly toothbrush and water. (Don't use toothpaste until your child is old enough to spit it out.) Be sure to brush all surfaces, especially along the gum line. Your dentist can show you how to best brush baby's teeth, answer any oral development questions you might have, and give you tips on how to prevent dental disease.



Include a photo of your family brushing together!

# Avoiding Thumb Sucking

**T**humb sucking over a long period of time can cause the jaw to deform, resulting in the need for braces or corrective surgery. But don't worry just yet. Thumb sucking in infants is normal, though pacifiers are preferable. Why? Pacifiers can be taken away, while thumbs can't. Also, some studies have linked pacifier use to a decreased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Whether your baby sucks its thumb or uses a pacifier, it's best to stop both by age 5.

# Baby's First Trip to the Dentist

**E**stablishing a good relationship between your child and the dentist at an early age will help you and your child develop and maintain a healthy mouth. The dentist can also provide you with valuable advice on keeping your child's teeth healthy and free from decay.

Schedule your baby's first dental appointment when the first tooth shows through the gum, but no later than your child's first birthday. During that first visit, you may hold the baby in your lap while the dentist examines his or her mouth. After the examination, the dentist may give you directions on caring for your baby's teeth, discuss your baby's risk for developing tooth decay, and answer any questions you might have.

## Fluoride Varnish

Fluoride varnish is a type of strengthened fluoride that helps prevent tooth decay in children. It is painted directly on the teeth. Because it becomes hard as soon as it comes in contact with the moisture in the mouth, the teeth do not need to be dry before applying it. This makes it easier to apply to young children and lessens the chance of swallowing it. The fluoride remains on the teeth for several hours and slowly absorbs into the teeth. After fluoride varnish application, the teeth may have a yellowish film. This is normal, and will go away within 24 hours. Your child can eat and drink right away, but should not brush his or her teeth until the next morning.

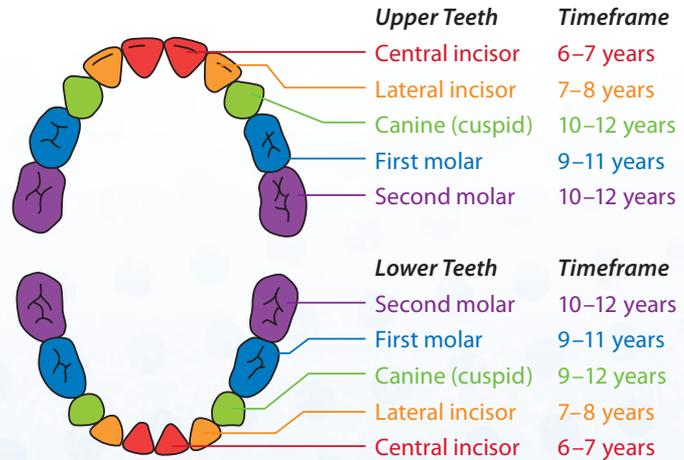
## Sealants

Want to prevent tooth decay in your baby's mouth? Sealants are an excellent solution. Sealants are a plastic coating that is painted on the pits and grooves of your baby's teeth. These pits and grooves tend to decay more easily than other parts of the teeth. In some cases your dentist might recommend certain teeth to be sealed if your child is at high risk for caries. The teeth that are most at risk of decay and most often covered by dental benefits are the permanent first and second molars. However, have a discussion with your child's dentist about what is best for your child's needs!

# Child's Tooth Loss

On the right is a chart that shows the approximate time frame a child will lose their teeth. Every child is different so they may not lose their teeth exactly when the chart says. If you have any concerns about your child's teeth contact their dentist.

## PRIMARY TOOTH LOSS TIMETABLE



## Tooth Loss Chart

Use this chart to record the date of your child's tooth loss.

Upper Teeth

Lower Teeth

# Q&A Dental Injuries and Emergency Treatment Advice

**W**hen your child needs urgent dental treatment, your dentist is ready to help. Please keep their emergency number available and convenient. We've provided some basic treatment advice below for some of the more common dental emergency situations that your baby may experience.

**Q: What should I do if my child's baby tooth is knocked out?**

A: Contact your dentist as soon as possible. The baby tooth should not be replanted because of the potential for subsequent damage to the developing permanent tooth.

**Q: What if a tooth is chipped or fractured?**

A: Contact your dentist immediately. Quick action can save the tooth, prevent infection and reduce the need for extensive dental treatment. Rinse the mouth with water and apply cold compresses to reduce swelling if the lip also was injured. If you can find the broken tooth fragment, place it in cold milk or water and bring it with you to the dental office.

**Q: What about a severe blow to the head or jaw fracture?**

A: You need immediate medical attention. A severe head injury can be life-threatening. Keep in mind that an emergency medical team might be able to reach you faster than you can get to the hospital.

**Q: What if my child has a toothache?**

A: Call your dentist immediately. To comfort your child, rinse the mouth with water. Over-the-counter children's pain medication, dosed according to your child's weight and age, might ease the symptoms. You may apply a cold compress or ice wrapped in a cloth to the face in the area of the pain, but do not put heat or aspirin on the sore area.

**Q: Can dental injuries be prevented?**

A: You can reduce the risk of dental injuries to your child by following a few simple suggestions.

- Always use a car seat for young children and require seat belts for everyone else in the car.
- Child-proof your home to prevent falls and electrical injuries.
- Take your child for regular dental check-ups. These visits provide your dentist with an opportunity to discuss additional age-appropriate preventive steps you can take for your child.

# Healthy Smile Photos

Capture your healthy smiles by adding photos here!

# Glossary

**Adult teeth:** A set of 32 permanent teeth that start to appear in the mouth around six years of age.

**Baby Bottle Syndrome:** The decay of a baby's teeth associated with drinking milk, juice or other sugary liquids from a bottle at nap time or night time. Also called "early childhood caries."

**Baby teeth:** Also called "milk teeth," "primary teeth" and "deciduous teeth," baby teeth are the first set of teeth that grow in the jaw during embryonic development. They typically start erupting through the gums at six months of age forming 20 baby teeth.

**Cavities (also called caries):** Small holes in the teeth that occur as a result of tooth decay.

**Early childhood caries:** See "Baby Bottle Syndrome."

**Fluoride varnish:** A type of strengthened fluoride that helps prevent tooth decay in children.

**Milk teeth:** See "baby teeth."

**Sealants:** A plastic coating that is painted on the pits and grooves of a tooth that have been shown to prevent tooth decay.

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):** The sudden, unexplained death of an infant that is not predicted by medical history. SIDS often occurs during sleep.

**Teething:** A stage beginning around six months of age in which the teeth begin erupting through the gums. Teething often causes discomfort and fussiness.

**Tooth decay:** The destruction of tooth enamel caused by acids in the mouth. This can eventually lead to cavities and more serious problems.

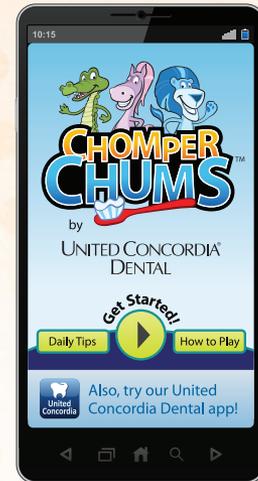
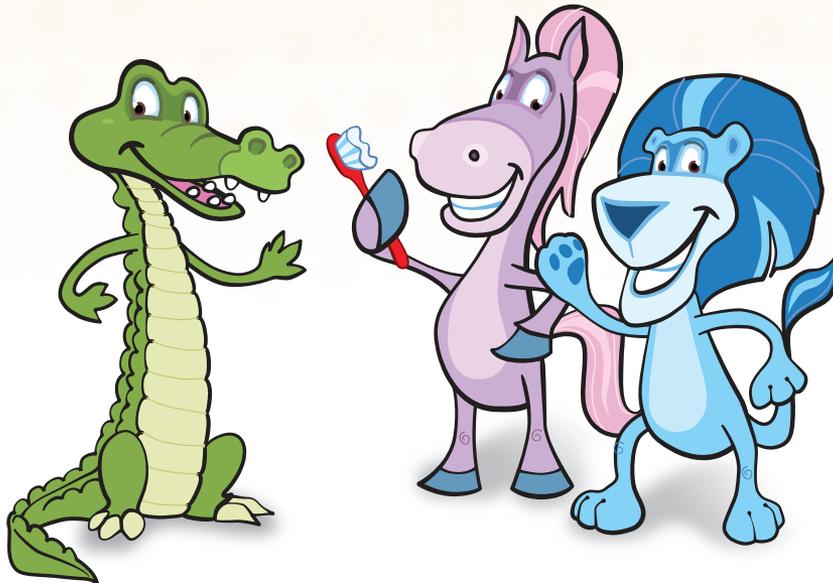
**Tooth eruption:** A process of oral development in which the teeth emerge through the gums and become visible in the mouth. Baby teeth tend to erupt between six months and two years of age.

# Make Brushing Fun with Chomper Chums<sup>®</sup>

**M**aintaining dental health can keep your children healthier in many other ways. But it doesn't have to be a chore. The free Chomper Chums mobile app from United Concordia turns brushing and flossing into a fun game.

Chomper Chums features three lovable animal characters. Each time your child brushes, they earn digital coins to buy food for their animal. The healthier the food, the healthier their animal becomes. They'll see why the right food choices help their animal grow and learn how to make healthier choices for themselves.

Chomper Chums also has a brushing timer and helpful demonstrations on how to brush, floss and rinse.



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TODAY!**

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the App Store**

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