

Breastfeeding and Baby's Teeth



WHY should I Breastfeed?

- ◆ Breastmilk is natural and the most nutritious food for your baby
- ◆ Breastfeeding helps your baby develop stronger jaw muscles and properly positioned teeth
- ◆ Health Canada recommends feeding your baby only breastmilk for the first 6 months, and continued breastfeeding, with appropriate complementary foods, for up to two years or beyond
- ◆ Breastfed babies may still develop tooth decay, so mouth care and healthy dental habits are important!

HOW do I Keep Baby Teeth Healthy?

- ◆ Breastfed babies need daily Vitamin D3 drops (minimum 400 IU) to help develop strong teeth. If you live in a northern community ask your health care provider if your baby needs more Vitamin D.
- ◆ Wipe baby's gums with a clean and damp cloth
 - Try: * after feeding
 - * at bath time
 - * before bed
- ◆ Brush baby's first tooth with a soft toothbrush 2x a day
- ◆ Lift your child's lip at least once a month to check their teeth. Chalky white lines or brown spots along the gum line is the start of tooth decay!

Did You Know?

Bring your baby for a dental visit by their **first** birthday!



How Much Toothpaste Should I Use?

Children from birth to 3 years: ask your dental team if your child is at risk for tooth decay*

- *If child is at risk:* use a small amount (the size of a grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste
- *If child is not at risk:* only use water

*A child may be at risk of early childhood tooth decay if the child: is living in an area with non-fluoridated water, has white chalky areas or cavities, has lots of sugary snacks/drinks between meals, teeth are not brushed daily, or caregiver has tooth decay.



A rice grain-sized amount of toothpaste

Picture derived from: http://www.cda-adc.ca/_files/position_statements/Fluorides-English-2010-06-08.pdf