



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at The Reschini Group



CHILDREN'S HEALTH: DENTAL HYGIENE

Just because primary teeth fall out doesn't mean children can go without dental care until their permanent teeth come in.

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, children should see a dentist when their first tooth appears and no later than their first birthday. Babies with dental problems, due to trauma, disease, or a developmental abnormality should see a dentist immediately.

How can I care for my child's teeth at home?

A child's first 20 primary teeth come in between the ages of 6 months and 3 years old. During this time it is important to start building good habits.

- Start brushing your child's teeth as soon as they come in. Brush his or her teeth for the first 4 to 5 years or until he or she seems able to do it alone.
- If your local water supply does not contain sufficient fluoride, your child may need fluoride supplements. Discuss this with your dentist.
- Do not put an infant or small child to bed with a bottle of juice or milk. The sugar and acids in these liquids can cause tooth decay.
- Start flossing your child's teeth as soon as he or she has two teeth that touch each other. Most likely you will need to assist your child with flossing until age 6 or 7.

- Children who are prone to cavities may start using a mouthwash that contains fluoride when they are around 6 years old. Refrain from giving children mouthwash that contains alcohol. Also, make sure it is never swallowed.

What is the best way to brush my child's teeth?

- When your child's primary teeth begin to come in, brush them with a child-sized toothbrush and water.
- Once the child is 2 years old, you can begin brushing his or her teeth with a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. Be sure they spit out the toothpaste and rinses with water so none is accidentally swallowed. Remember that some kinds of toothpaste are not recommended for children, so read the manufacturer's label before purchasing.
- Begin teaching your child how to brush his or her own teeth around age 2 or 3. You may still need to supervise or assist until they are around 6 or 7 years old to ensure that they are brushing effectively.
- Be sure to replace your child's toothbrush every 3 to 4 months—sooner if it appears worn.

If you ever have questions about your child's dental care, be sure to consult with your dentist.