

# Starting your child on the right path to dental health

## Easy tips for laying the foundation

Healthy teeth are an important part of your child's overall health. Even though they aren't permanent, baby teeth serve as placeholders for adult teeth, so keeping them strong and cavity-free is key:

- “Cavities are among the most common chronic diseases affecting children in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- “Baby teeth are at risk for decay as soon as they appear — usually around 6 months of age.<sup>2</sup>
- “Children who have poor dental health typically miss more school and have lower grades than students with good dental health.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, tooth decay in children is preventable. Starting healthy habits early will help keep your child's teeth strong for life.

### Your child's checklist for a healthy mouth

- Brushing teeth twice a day for two minutes at a time with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste
- Regular dental checkups, starting by the child's first birthday
- A diet made up primarily of healthy foods, with a limited amount of sweet and sugary foods
- Liquids limited mostly to tap water, which has fluoride
- Dental sealants, if your child's dentist advises it
- Supervised brushing

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Children's oral health* (May 14, 2019): [cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/childrens-oral-health/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/childrens-oral-health/index.html).  
<sup>2</sup> American Dental Association: *Healthy habits* (accessed June 2020): [mouthhealthy.org](https://www.mouthhealthy.org).