

Early childhood dental visits

When will my child start getting teeth?

The first baby tooth comes through at around six months of age but teeth can be early or late. All baby teeth are usually present by around three years of age and the first adult teeth normally start appearing around age six.

When should my child visit the dentist?

It is recommended that your child has their first dental check-up by their first birthday. At the least, very young children should have an assessment by a child health professional every six to 12 months at their child health checks. This simple check helps to identify signs and high risks of tooth decay. Regular visits with a dentist during childhood are important. For many children, a check-up at least every 12 months is sufficient but those at high risk of tooth decay may need more frequent visits until their risk of decay has stabilised.

Why is it important to get my child's teeth checked?

Baby teeth are important for speaking and chewing, and hold space in the jaws for the adult teeth. Tooth decay and trauma can cause pain, infection, difficulties with eating and speech, and lead to crowding of the adult teeth. Extensive tooth decay or dental infections in young children may require hospitalisation and treatment under general anaesthetic.

Tooth decay is very common. Poor oral health in childhood can increase the chance of dental problems in adolescence and adulthood. Regular check-ups help to prevent problems and can even reverse very early-stage tooth decay.

What will be checked at my child's dental visit?

- Oral hygiene, such as toothbrushing techniques and the use of fluoride toothpaste
- Risk and signs of tooth decay and health of gums
- Growth and development of teeth and jaws, and problems with the bite
- Diet and feeding patterns
- Habits such as dummy sucking or thumb sucking.

Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)

The CDBS is a Medicare-funded dental program for children whose families receive Family Tax Benefit Part A, and other eligible benefits. These children are entitled to up to $1000 of dental treatment over two calendar years for a range of services, including examinations, cleaning, x-rays, fillings, fissure sealants, extractions and root canal therapy.

The CDBS does not cover orthodontics or cosmetic dental treatment.

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