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DENTAL CARE FOR CHILDREN

Why should my child see a dentist?

Having a dentist regularly check your child's teeth encourages good dental habits and can prevent more costly and painful problems later. Your dentist can help teach you and your child good food choices, feeding practices, and proper brushing.

It is important for your child to see the dentist while he still has baby teeth (primary teeth). Even though your child will lose these teeth, it is important to develop the habits that will protect the permanent teeth before the baby teeth are lost.

When should my child visit the dentist?

Your child should start to see a dentist sometime between 1 and 3 years of age. Thereafter, a dental appointment is generally recommended every 6 months.

Your child should also go to the dentist:

- as soon as you or your child notice a dental problem
- before he or she starts playing contact sports
- if there are dark spots in the pits or fissures of the teeth
- if the upper and lower teeth do not come together correctly (malocclusion).

Can illness or medicine damage my child's teeth?

A chronic (ongoing) disease or medication can sometimes cause dental problems. If your child has a chronic disease, check with a dentist about any special dental care your child needs. Many medicines have sugar or other ingredients in them that damage the teeth.

How can I afford dental care for my child?

Affording dental care can sometimes be difficult. Your health insurance program, such as Medicaid, may cover dental benefits, so check this resource first. If you are concerned about paying for the dentist, talk to your health care provider or contact a local dental society about affordable dental care.