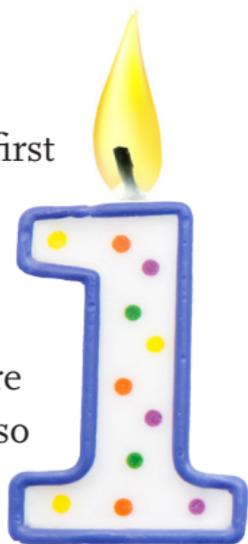


## First Visit by First Birthday

**A** child's first dental visit should be scheduled within six months of the first tooth eruption or by the first birthday.

Establishing a “dental home” for your child earlier in life will allow him/her to get to know the dentist and become more comfortable in a dental setting. It can also enable the dentist to learn more about your child's needs earlier or before problems occur.



During a typical first visit, your child will stay with you while the dentist simply examines his or her teeth and/or gums. Creating a positive and happy first visit is important, so your child doesn't meet the dentist for the first time during a scary or painful emergency.

Because studies show that tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease in the U.S., it's never too early to start developing good oral health habits.<sup>1</sup> Even though teething doesn't typically start until around six months of age, parents should begin establishing an oral health routine even before the baby's first tooth appears.

### *Did you know?*

*Your baby's primary (baby) teeth are already present in the jaw at birth.*



# Quick bites

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## Oral health tips to follow at home:

- **No bottles in bed**—If a bottle is necessary, make sure it is filled with water. Breast milk, juice and formula contain sugar and can lead to tooth decay.
- **Massage the gums**—Use a damp washcloth to lightly massage your baby’s gums after each feeding.
- **Don’t spread germs**—Don’t share the same cups or silverware with your baby, as it can spread germs and bacteria.
- **Offer teething relief**—Give your baby a cool teething ring, the back of a small cold spoon or a cold wet washcloth to relieve teething pain.
- **Use the right pacifiers and bottles**—Different types of nipples can affect the muscles in your baby’s mouth. Talk to your dentist about which type to use at which age.



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1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General—Executive Summary. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, 2000.

Delta Dental of Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee

