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Baby teeth are important!

Things you can do to help your baby's teeth:

- Avoid passing germs by not sharing spoons or licking pacifiers.
- Keep the bottle out of the crib.
- Serve juice in a cup, not a bottle.
- Clean baby's mouth with a soft cloth or infant toothbrush.
- Take your baby to the dentist by his or her first birthday.

My baby's firsts:

First smile: _____

First tooth: _____

Drank from a cup: _____ (Goal is before age 1)

Dental visit: _____ (Goal is age 1)

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FIRST THINGS FIRST
azftf.gov

Maricopa County Department of Public Health
WeArePublicHealth.org

First Teeth First
firstteethfirst.org

Arizona Department of Health Services

For more information, call 1-800-232-1676
or visit www.azdhs.gov/cfhs/ooh/
If your child is on AHCCCS or KidsCare, dental visits are covered.

A guide to oral health for your baby's first year.

ARE YOU PASSING TOOTH DECAY TO YOUR BABY?

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Protect your baby's teeth in the first year.

Your baby is born with 20 little teeth growing under the gums. You can't see them. But they are there!

Did you know?

Germs + Sugar = Tooth Decay

(Sugar is found in nearly all food)

- **Tooth decay is an infection.** Germs + sugary food left in a baby's mouth can eat holes in the teeth called tooth decay.
- **Babies are born with no germs** in their mouths!
- **You may pass germs** that cause tooth decay to your baby when you share food, spoons, toothbrushes or lick a baby's pacifier.
- **The longer sugary food** is on the tooth, the more time germs have to grow and cause tooth decay.
- **Sleeping with a bottle** all night or at naptime gives the germs food to grow.

Take care of your baby's mouth right from the start.

- **Starting at birth,** clean your baby's gums and teeth with a clean, damp, soft washcloth or soft infant toothbrush. You can wipe away food and even germs. Do this even if you can't see the teeth yet.
- **Avoid passing germs** to your baby's mouth. Don't put a spoon, a pacifier, or a toothbrush in your mouth before giving it to your baby. Ask grandparents or daycare providers not to share germs, too.

Take care of your mouth

Visit the dentist and have any tooth decay treated right away. This will cut down on the germs in your mouth, leaving fewer germs to pass on to your baby.

Your baby's first tooth.

- **Look for your baby's first tooth at about 6 months.**
- **Schedule your baby's first dental visit** around his or her first birthday. Starting dental visits early can prevent costly dental care later. If your baby is on Medicaid, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) or KidsCare, dental visits are covered.
- **Look at your baby's gums and teeth** at least once a month. Healthy teeth should be all one color. See a dentist if you see white or brown spots or stains on your baby's teeth.

What else can I do to help my baby's teeth?

- Start a healthy habit; keep the bottle out of your baby's crib.
- A pacifier or thumb can comfort your baby at nap time and bed time.
- Give your baby a clean pacifier (no honey or sugar).
- Use a bottle only for formula and breastmilk.
- If you give your baby juice, use a cup, and never put juice in a bottle.
- Only water in a sippy cup unless it's at mealtime.