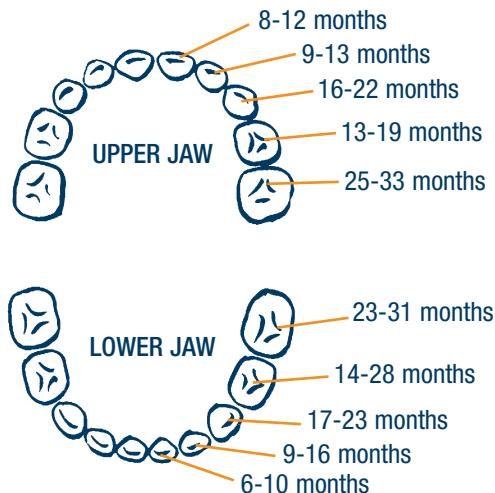


Baby teeth – 0-5 years

About baby teeth

When your child is born, they generally have all their baby teeth (also known as primary teeth), but you cannot see them yet. The diagram below is a general guide to when baby teeth will appear. The timing for the appearance of teeth can vary greatly. Girls teeth generally appear earlier than boys. Most children will have all of their 20 baby (primary) teeth by the age of three years.



Healthy baby teeth are important because they:

- Help toddlers eat a nutritious diet
- Help toddlers develop good speech
- Maintain the space for the permanent teeth. If baby teeth are lost early this can reduce the space for permanent teeth and will lead to overcrowding.

Good oral hygiene

Did you know that your oral hygiene can affect your baby's teeth? Newborn babies do not have the bacteria (germs) in their mouth that can cause tooth decay (holes). Anyone caring for the baby can pass the bacteria that causes tooth decay. This can happen by sharing spoons or cleaning a dummy or bottle with their own mouth, or kisses on the mouth.

It is important for carers to have good oral hygiene – brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste – to reduce or eliminate the chance of passing bacteria to their baby.

Toothbrushing

- Toothbrushing should start as soon as the first tooth appears.
- Use a small, soft toothbrush and a smear of low fluoride toothpaste twice a day. Low fluoride toothpastes, created especially for children under six years of age, are available in most supermarkets. Fluoride helps to protect teeth.
- Children only require a small amount of fluoride toothpaste and should not be allowed to dispense toothpaste themselves. Parents should assist with toothbrushing until children are about 7-8 years old.

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