

THE SMILE GUIDE

From your baby's very first tooth through their teenage years, healthy habits look a little different at every stage. Here's practical, age-by-age guidance from our pediatric dental team to help your child's smile thrive.

BIRTH – 12 MONTHS

INFANTS

- Wipe gums with a soft, damp cloth after feedings, even before the first tooth appears.
- Once teeth erupt, brush twice daily with a rice-grain smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- Avoid bedtime bottles of milk or juice, which can lead to early childhood cavities.
- Schedule a first dental visit by your child's first birthday.

1 – 3 YEARS

TODDLERS

- Brush twice daily with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste once your toddler can spit.
- Begin flossing as soon as two teeth touch.
- Limit juice to 4 oz a day, and offer water between meals instead.
- Most pacifier and thumb-sucking habits fade naturally by age 2–4.

3 – 5 YEARS

PRESCHOOL

- Supervise brushing until your child has the dexterity to do it well alone (often by first grade).
- Offer crunchy fruits and vegetables, which help naturally clean teeth.
- Limit sticky, sugary snacks like gummies and fruit snacks.
- Keep up with checkups every six months to catch changes early.

6 – 12 YEARS

SCHOOL-AGE

- Brush twice daily and floss once daily with a full pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
- Ask about dental sealants as permanent molars come in.
- Limit soda and sports drinks, which wear down enamel over time.
- If your child plays sports, ask us about a custom mouthguard.

13+ YEARS

TEENS

- Keep brushing and flossing consistent, even with a busy schedule.
- Extra care around braces or retainers helps prevent decay and staining.
- Watch for frequent snacking and energy drinks, which raise cavity risk.
- We'll start talking about wisdom teeth around age 16.

GROWING WITH YOUR CHILD

Every stage brings new habits and new questions — our team is here to guide you through each one. Bring your questions to your child's next visit; we're always happy to tailor advice to their specific needs.