



For Parents

The following are some frequently asked questions by parents experiencing their child's first dental appointment and by parents whose children have been regularly visiting a Dentist already.

- When should your child visit the dentist?

The goal is to have your child visit the dentist before there is a problem with his or her teeth. Children should begin to see the dentist within 6 months of the appearance of the first tooth or by one year of age. In most cases, a checkup every six months will let your child's dentist catch small problems early on the prevent major issues down the road.

- Why are health teeth important for a child?

A child's first teeth are important for a child to learn how to eat and speak properly. Having good teeth is also important for a child's self image. Healthy baby teeth and gums ensure a healthy spot for the child's permanent teeth.

- How can you prepare your child for their first visit to the dentist?

It is important to make your child's first visit the dentist fun. You might want to consider preparing for their first visit by reading a related book. Some great books for kids that relate to their first dental visit are:

Just going to the Dentist by Mercer Mayer

Barney goes to the Dentist by Linda Cress Dowdy

Show me your smile: A visit to the Dentist (Dora the Explorer) by Christine Ricci

We also strive to create an environment in the dental operator where the child feels comfortable and safe. The dental staff all have experience with children and over time this experience has led to certain tricks and techniques to get a child's attention and help in making the dental visit fun. As a parent, your first instinct may be to get involved in attempting to calm or distract your child but please, take your cues from the Dental staff. They will have you get involved when they deem it necessary. The staff has also adopted certain lingo and nicknames for some of the procedures and tools used in the dental examination. Please pay close attention to the words and phrases used by the dentist and the staff to make the visit more fun and educational.

- Why should you take your child for regular dental checkups?

Regular dental visits help you find out if the cleaning your child (or you) is doing at home is working. Plus the dentist can find problems right away and fix them. Your child will learn that going to the dentist helps prevent problems and keeps them healthy.

- Are x-rays okay for your child?

Sometimes, there are occasions when your child's dentist may want to take x-rays. X-rays are a diagnostic tool used to see if there is decay between the teeth. It will also show if teeth are coming the way they should.

- When should a child start brushing their own teeth?

Young children are not able to clean their own teeth properly. As a parent, you must do it for them when they are very young, and do it with them as they get older. When your child can write (not print) his or her name, your child is ready to do a good job brushing their own teeth. You should always observe their brushing technique to ensure they are doing a good job.

- What is the best kind of toothbrush for a child to use?

The best kind of brush is soft, with rounded bristles. It should be the right size for your child's mouth. Every 3-4 months you should change your child's toothbrush. Children can be hard on the toothbrush and once bristles get bent or worn down, they will not do a good job. The Dentist or Hygienist will recommend the best toothbrush for you during your visit.

- How much toothpaste is recommended for a child?

Use only a bit of toothpaste, about the size of a pea, and make sure your child spits it out.

- Is it important for children to brush their teeth at bedtime?

Brushing at bedtime is very important. Germs and sugars that cause cavities have all night to cause damage when left untouched. When your child sleeps, he or she does not produce as much saliva, which helps keep the mouth clean.