

Childs FIRST visit to the dentist

A child's first visit should occur within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth. This will usually be around 2 – 3 years of age.

WHY?

To . . .

Educate parents on how to care for these first teeth and the ones that will follow
Help evaluate the diet patterns and identify potential risk factors for cavities
Establish a place to go and number to call in case of dental emergency (especially when infants start toddling!)

Establish a plan to prevent cavity causing bacteria from infecting your infants mouth. Allow helpful bacteria to establish instead.

- This can only be done before age 2, but the earlier the better.
- Less harmful bacteria = lower risk for cavities.

Learn proper use of sippy cups and pacifiers to decrease growth and development problems that can lead to braces.

Evaluate fluoride intake and keep it within safe levels.

Evaluate tooth eruption and discuss eruption patterns.

BUT MY PHYSICIAN TOLD ME TO START AT AGE 5 – 6 YEARS

This was common teaching based on knowledge available when they were trained.

Now we know that baby teeth are important, and the cavity process and risk factors are developing before age 3

- Baby teeth determine positions of adult teeth
- Decay in baby teeth predict lifetime risk for cavities
- Significant dental issues at age three add to parental emotional and financial trauma
- Significant dental issues at age three would have been easily preventable with coaching at age 1.