

## How Can Early Childhood Caries Be Prevented?

- Hold your infant while feeding
- Don't prop a bottle or allow a baby to fall asleep with a bottle
- Don't use a bottle as a pacifier
- Don't give a baby a pacifier that has been dipped in anything sweet
- When you start your baby on fruit juice, use only a cup
- Don't give juice or sweetened drinks from the bottle
- Don't feed babies soda pop, Kool-Aid, or other sweetened drinks
- Start using a cup at 6 months
- Wean your baby off the bottle by one year of age
- Clean your baby's teeth as soon as they start to come in

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# EARLY CHILDHOOD CARIES PREVENTION



Healthy Teeth

for Mom and Me

**Expectant moms with unhealthy teeth and gums have a greater risk of delivering low birth weight babies. They can also infect their babies with the germs that cause cavities.**

## **BABY TEETH ARE IMPORTANT!**

**Children need baby teeth to:**

- Have good general health
- Be able to eat properly
- Learn to talk properly
- Sleep comfortably
- Learn without being distracted by dental pain
- Hold space for the adult teeth
- Reduce the chances of getting cavities in adult teeth
- Have a happy smile!

## **FACTS ABOUT**

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARI ES**

- It develops very rapidly
- The upper front teeth are affected first
- The baby molars are the next teeth that are affected
- When it becomes very severe, the lower front teeth are affected

## **WHAT CAUSES**

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARI ES?**

- Giving baby a bottle to sleep with
- Sleeping all night at the breast
- Propping a bottle
- Using a bottle as a pacifier
- Using a pacifier dipped in sweeteners such as sugar or syrup
- Allowing toddlers to walk around with a bottle

## **PROPER USE OF THE BOTTLE**

- Bottles should be used to feed babies who are not breastfeeding or who are not yet able to drink from a cup.
- Feed only formula, breast milk, or water from a bottle.
- Offer the bottle only at feeding times.
- The bottle is **not** a toy or a pacifier.
- If you are breast feeding, remove baby from your breast as soon as baby is done feeding
- Sleeping times are not feeding times. The baby who goes to bed with a bottle can get painful tooth decay. Instead you can:
  - *Offer a blanket, stuffed animal or favorite toy*
  - *Give baby a warm bath*
  - *Rock baby to sleep*
  - *As a last resort, allow WATER ONLY in the bottle*