

Something to
smile about...



The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Alabama Department of Public Health



Start now
to give
your child
a healthy
smile.



The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Alabama Department of Public Health

Start now to give your child a healthy smile...

- Did you know that baby teeth are important for your child's healthy smile?
- Baby teeth help your child chew food, talk clearly, and they save space for the permanent teeth.
- A healthy smile also makes your child feel good about himself and look good to his friends.
- And finally, good overall health depends on good dental health.
- You can give your child a healthy smile...the time to start is now.

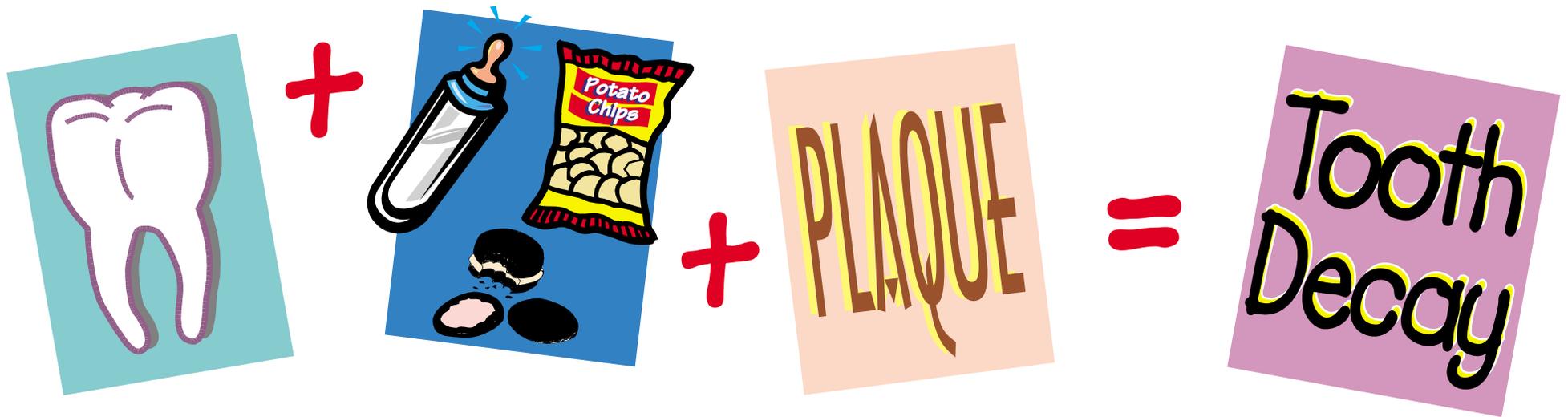
Early
childhood
caries is
serious!



The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Alabama Department of Public Health

Early Childhood Caries is serious...

- This is a picture of Early Childhood Caries in a young child. You may have heard it called Baby Bottle Tooth Decay.
- Early Childhood Caries can be painful and dangerous for a child.
- If left untreated, the teeth can abscess, and infections from abscessed teeth can lead to life-threatening health problems. In some cases the infection can spread to an eye or cause swelling of the brain.
- The good news is: Early Childhood Caries can be prevented by following some simple steps.



Tooth + Food + Plaque = Tooth Decay
(causes acid) (cavities)



Tooth + Food + Plaque (causes acid) = Tooth Decay (Cavities)...

- For decay to happen, you must have a tooth, some food (or drink) and plaque.
- Plaque is a soft, sticky layer of germs that forms on teeth everyday. If you scratch an unclean tooth with your fingernail, you will remove a sticky film. That is plaque.
- When plaque is left on teeth, many foods can cause decay to begin. Germs in plaque use sugars and starches in food to make acid. This acid causes teeth to decay.
- You probably already knew that sugar causes tooth decay, but the natural sugar in milk, juice and baby formula, as well as starchy foods, can cause it too.

Cavities can get worse very fast.



Mild



Moderate



Severe

See your dentist as soon as possible!



The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Alabama Department of Public Health

Cavities can get worse very fast...

- Early Childhood Caries usually starts as chalky white spots on the upper front teeth near the gums.
- If left untreated, these white spots can become cavities in a very short time—within 30 days. If the child does not see a dentist soon, the cavities can get larger, could become painful, and may have to be treated in a hospital operating room.
- So if you see white spots on your child's teeth, take him to the dentist as soon as possible.



Keep your own teeth and gums clean.



Go to the dentist before your baby is born.



Clean baby's teeth and gums every day.

Start now to prevent Early Childhood Caries!



The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Alabama Department of Public Health

Start now to prevent Early Childhood Caries...

- If you are pregnant, it's important to have a dental checkup before your baby is born.
- Keep your own mouth healthy and clean to prevent the spread of cavity-causing germs. If you have tooth decay in your mouth, you can pass the germs to your baby after birth.
- At birth begin wiping your baby's gums at least once a day with a clean soft bath cloth. As the baby teeth come in, keep cleaning the gums and teeth with a bath cloth or use a soft baby toothbrush.

When nursing or giving a bottle...



- Use only formula, water or breast milk in the bottle.
- Hold your baby when feeding.



When nursing or giving a bottle...

- Be sure to give only formula, water or breast milk in the bottle.
- Never put juice, soda, or other sweet drinks in the baby bottle.
- It's best to hold your baby when feeding with a bottle. Do not let your baby sleep with a bottle or breast in her mouth.
- If you use a pacifier, do not dip it in anything sweet like sugar or honey.

As your baby grows...

- Start cup at about 6 months.
- Stop bottle by 1st birthday.
- Limit juice to meals and snacks.



The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Alabama Department of Public Health

As your baby grows...

- Start giving your baby juice when he can drink from a cup—usually about 6 months of age. Remember, never give juice in a bottle.
- Trade the bottle for a cup by the 1st birthday. Give all liquids from a cup.
- Unlike bottle feeding, breastfeeding can continue as long as you and your baby want. When you begin juice for your breast-fed baby, offer it from a cup to prepare him for weaning later.
- Kids love juice, but it's important to limit juice to meals and snacks. If you let your child sip on juice all day long, he will be at risk for cavities. Four (4) to six (6) ounces of juice a day is enough.

Snack time!

Give
healthy
snacks.



The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
Alabama Department of Public Health

Give healthy snacks...

- Young children have small stomachs and need three (3) regular meals plus 2 or 3 snacks to meet their daily needs.
- Plan healthy snacks to meet a part of their daily needs. These foods are good for teeth and general health:
 - High protein foods: meat, bean dip, peanut butter
 - Dairy foods: milk, cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese
 - Fruits and vegetables

(Note to WIC Providers: Advise about appropriate foods and choking precautions according to child's age and development.)
- Sweets are okay once in a while, but give them with a meal as dessert, not at snack time.
- If you let your child snack all day long, she will be at risk for cavities – 2 or 3 healthy snacks a day are enough.

Visit the dentist

- Plan first dental visit at about age 1.
- Go sooner if you see white spots.
- Go every 6 months after that.



Visit the dentist...

- Many parents don't realize that a baby should be taken to the dentist starting at age 1.
- Take your child around his first birthday or sooner if you notice white spots.
- After that your child should have a regular dental visit every 6 months.

Do you need help finding a dentist? We can give you information to help you find a dentist you can afford.

(Note to WIC provider: This information is on a separate companion piece.)

- 1 Baby teeth are important.
- 2 Mom's teeth are important.
- 3 Clean teeth and gums every day.
- 4 Only formula, water or breast milk in bottle.
- 5 No bottle or breast when sleeping.
- 6 Give juice in a cup only.
- 7 Trade bottle for cup by the first birthday.
- 8 Give healthy snacks.
- 9 Baby's check-ups start at age 1.
- 10 See white spots?
See the dentist.



Remember...

- **Baby teeth are important.** They make a difference in how your child eats, talks, looks and feels.
- **Your oral health is important.** Make sure you have healthy teeth and gums before your baby is born.
- **Early Childhood Caries can be prevented.** Follow these simple rules:
 - Clean your baby's gums and teeth every day.
 - Give only formula, water or breast milk in a bottle.
 - Never let your baby sleep with a bottle or breast in her mouth.
 - Give juice only in a cup, starting at about six months.
 - Trade the bottle for a cup by the first birthday.
 - Give your child healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables instead of sweets.
 - Start regular dental checkups for your baby at age 1.
 - Check for white spots—see the dentist right away if they are present.



**The Nutrition Program for Women,
Infants, and Children from
The Alabama Department of Public Health**

www.adph.org/wic

Funded by a USDA grant and developed through a partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health WIC Division and Oral Health Branch and The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry and School of Public Health

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Alabama Department of Public Health
Bureau of Family Health Service
Division of WIC