

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay, or Baby Bottle Syndrome, or Nursing Bottle Mouth are all terms used to describe a dental condition which involves the rapid decay of many or all the baby teeth of an infant or child.

The teeth most likely to be damaged are the upper front teeth. They are some of the first teeth to erupt and thus have the longest exposure time to the sugars in the bottle. The lower front teeth tend to be protected by the tongue as the child sucks on the nipple of the bottle or the breast.



Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay is caused by frequent exposure of a child's teeth for long periods of time to liquid containing sugars. When your baby falls asleep with:

- a bottle containing formula, milk or juice
- a pacifier dipped in honey
- while breast feeding

The liquid pools around the front teeth. During sleep, the bacteria living in every baby's mouth, turns the milk sugar or other sugars to acid which causes the decay.

Parents may not know there is a problem until serious damage has been done:

- Oral checks should be performed by parents to detect early signs of the disease.
- Brown spots along the gumline on your child's teeth are signs which should alert you.
- If your child prefers soft foods, frowns or cries when eating cold, sweet, or hard foods, they should be checked for tooth decay.

By the time tooth decay is noticed it may be too late and crowns, pulp therapy, or even extraction of the decayed teeth may be necessary. As a result, your child may suffer from long term disorders which include speech impediments, possible psychological damage, crooked or crowded teeth, and poor oral health.

- You can prevent this from happening to your child's teeth by learning how to protect them.
- clean your child's teeth daily

- never allow your child to fall asleep with a bottle filled with juice, milk, or formula (or when awake, sip on it for long periods of time as a pacifier)
- start bottle weaning by at least a year
- give your child plain water for thirst
- make sure your child gets the fluoride needed to prevent decay
- have regular dental visits for your child beginning when their first tooth erupts

TIP: Cut back on sugary bottles by gradually watering them down until they are only water.

Most children begin life with strong, healthy teeth. Help your child's teeth stay that way. Your newborn is totally dependent upon you as a parent. The decisions you make will have a vital effect on your child's dental future.