

# Oral Health Guidance for Dentists

## Pregnant Patients

- Screen patient for risk of caries and periodontal disease.
- Encourage positive oral health habits.
- Some Delta Dental plans offer an additional cleaning for pregnant members. Not all plans offer this feature so we recommend verifying the patient's eligibility by contacting the appropriate Delta Dental member company. Contact information can be found on our website.
- Provide information about the importance of a child's oral health and the need to get children to the dentist by age 1 or within six months after the first tooth erupts.

## New Parents

- Screen mother for risk of caries and periodontal disease.
- Educate parents about optimal exposure to fluoride including tap water for drinking and water for reconstitution of formula.
- Educate about oral health care for infants. Teach parents to cleanse the infant's teeth as soon as they erupt with either a washcloth or soft toothbrush to help reduce colonization.



- **Newborn to 2 months:** Wipe infant's gums with soft cloth after each feeding.
- **4 months:** Cleanse infant's gums/teeth with washcloth or soft toothbrush.
- **6 months to 1 year:** Cleanse infant's gums/teeth with washcloth or soft toothbrush with a smear of fluoridated toothpaste.
- **1 year+:** Cleanse child's teeth with soft toothbrush and fluoridated toothpaste.
- Provide information about the effects of diet on dentition and to avoid non-nutritive sucking habits (e.g., giving a bottle with milk or juice to an infant at bedtime).
- Provide information on the etiology and prevention of Early Childhood Caries (ECC), including cleaning of pacifier or bottle and avoiding sharing of utensils.
- Provide information about the importance of a child's oral health and the need to get children to the dentist by age 1 or within six months after the first tooth erupts.

## 1-Year-Old or Infant with First Tooth Eruption

- Screen patient for risk of caries.
- Record thorough medical (infant) and dental (mother or primary caregiver and infant) histories.
- Educate parents about optimal exposure to fluoride including tap water for drinking and distilled water for reconstitution of formula.
- Assess infant's bite, facial growth and development.
- Demonstrate various tooth brushing and flossing techniques and positions to help parents care for their infant's teeth properly.
- Discuss diet and feeding/snacking practices that may put the child at risk for decay.
- Provide information on the etiology and prevention of Early Childhood Caries (ECC) including cleaning of pacifier or bottle. With introduction of solid food, educate parents about the importance of not sharing utensils or pre-chewing food that can facilitate transmission of cariogenic bacteria.
- Set up ongoing preventive checkups for infant.
- Remind parents to never dip a pacifier in anything sweet.
- Pacifiers are preferred over thumb sucking since a child can be weaned off a pacifier easier.

For more information, visit [oralhealth.deltadental.com](http://oralhealth.deltadental.com) or [aapd.org](http://aapd.org).