



6737 W. Washington St., Suite 2360, West Allis, WI 53214

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 6, 2024

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Laura Schreiner

lschreiner@wda.org

Wisconsin Dental Association explains why baby teeth matter

WEST ALLIS, Wis. – They’re destined to fall out eventually, but it’s still critical to brush, floss and seek dental care for your child’s baby teeth — after all, primary teeth are as important to infants and young children as permanent teeth are to older children and adults. During February, National Children’s Dental Health Month, the Wisconsin Dental Association is sharing why baby teeth matter.

Primary teeth play a big part in a child’s oral health, overall health and development. They are essential for:

- Chewing — the first step toward proper nutrition. Children do not lose their back primary teeth until ages 10-12.
- Teaching children to speak clearly and smile brightly, which helps build their confidence
- Setting proper spacing for adult teeth. Early loss of primary teeth can lead to shifting of adjacent teeth, crowding and orthodontic concerns.
- Helping children develop strong oral hygiene habits

Dr. Cliff Hartmann, a pediatric dentist in New Berlin and past president of the WDA, treats children every week for primary tooth decay.

“Many people don’t realize that cavities can also develop in baby teeth,” said Dr. Hartmann. “One type of decay called Early Childhood Caries only develops in children under the age of five. These children can have severely decayed and abscessed primary teeth that need to be treated with extractions and crowns.”

Fortunately, there are several steps parents can take to keep their children’s primary teeth healthy:

- Don’t put your child to bed with a bottle filled with milk and juice. (Also, children should be weaned from bottles by 12-15 months.)
- When your child’s baby teeth begin to come in, brush them twice daily with a small, soft-bristled toothbrush and a rice-sized bit of fluoride toothpaste.
- Once your child has two teeth that touch, use dental floss to clean in between them.
- Make sure your child drinks plenty of plain, fluoridated water to wash away leftover food, support saliva production and keep enamel clean.
- Minimize sugar in your child’s diet.
- Schedule regular dental appointments.

“We recommend that children see a dentist by their first birthday,” said Dr. Hartmann. “At that initial appointment, dentists can help educate the parents on methods to prevent tooth decay and start their child on a lifelong path of good oral health.”

For more information about your child's oral health, please visit www.aapd.org or mouthhealthy.org. Find a dentist near you by using ADA's [Find-a-Dentist](#) tool.

About the Wisconsin Dental Association

The Wisconsin Dental Association, with 3,100 member dentists and a number of dental hygienists, is the leading voice for dentistry in Wisconsin. WDA members are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. Established in 1870, the WDA is headquartered in West Allis and has a legislative office in Madison. The WDA is affiliated with the American Dental Association - the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. For more information, call 414-276-4520, visit WDA.org and find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).