

# Better Health Through the Ages

 **Brushing****Infants**  
Birth-18 months

Clean gums with a soft cloth until teeth begin to develop. At 4-7 months, teeth will begin to erupt. Start brushing your baby's teeth for two minutes, twice daily with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste.

**Preschool**  
3-5 years

By age 3, a full set of 20 primary teeth will be in place. Brush with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste, twice daily.

**School-age to adulthood**

Brush for two minutes, twice daily with fluoride toothpaste.

 **Flossing****Infants**  
Birth-18 months

Too early to start flossing.

**Preschool**  
3-5 years

Help your child clean between their teeth with floss or a special brush.

**School-age to adulthood**

Floss once daily.

 **Cleaning and Exams****Infants**  
Birth-18 months

Visit the dentist when the first tooth erupts, and no later than the first birthday.

**Preschool**  
3-5 years

Be sure to take your child to the dentist once per year, or as often as the dentist recommends.

**School-age to adulthood**

Visit your dentist regularly and be sure to take advantage of preventive care, which may detect problems before they become complex, painful or costly.

 **Fluoride****Infants**  
Birth-18 months

Use a small amount (pea-sized) of fluoride toothpaste to brush your child's teeth once they appear. Encourage drinking tap water instead of other sugary beverages.

**School-age through teens**  
3-5 years

Higher-risk children and higher-risk teens should get two or more fluoride treatments each year.

**Young adults to adulthood**

Fluoride through your toothpaste and drinking water likely will be sufficient, but some higher-risk adults may need additional fluoride treatment.

 **Sealants****Infants through preschool**  
Birth-5 years

Likely not needed, but consult with your dentist.

**School-age through teens**

Higher-risk children ages 6-9 should get sealants on their first molars and higher-risk children ages 10-14 should get sealants on their second molars. Higher-risk teens may require sealants.

**Young adults to adulthood**

Likely not needed, but consult your dentist.

 **Gum Disease****Infants**  
Birth-18 months

Gum disease is often preventable. Avoid sharing eating utensils and bottles, and avoid “cleaning” your child’s pacifier with your mouth.

**Preschool through teens**  
3-18 years

Frequent consumption of sugary foods and beverages can lead to cavities and gum disease. For children, teach them about how decay develops and model good oral health behavior. For teens, be sure to take care of preventive care and exams.

**Young adults to adulthood**

Gum disease can be prevented or easily treated if discovered early. Left untreated, it can lead to tissue, bone and tooth loss. Be sure to take advantage of preventive care and exams.

 **Complex Procedures****Infants through preschool**  
Birth-5 years

Be sure to examine your child’s mouth for changes and share anything concerning with your dentist.

**School-age through teens**

Encourage kids participating in sports and other potentially dangerous activities to wear a mouth guard.

**Young adults to adulthood**

Visit your dentist regularly and be sure to take advantage of preventive care, which may detect problems before they become more complex, painful or costly. If you experience a change in your mouth, discuss it with your dentist.

 **Dry Mouth****Infants through young adults**

Likely not applicable, but consult with your dentist should you have concerns.

**Through adulthood**

Dry mouth is often a normal part of aging and may lead to an increase in cavities. Many medications have side effects that may include dry mouth.

 **Basics****Infants**  
Birth-18 months

Choose tap water over sugary beverages and limit sugary foods. Pacifiers and thumb sucking can affect the placement of adult teeth, so have a plan to help your child give those up by age 2.

**Preschool through young adults**

Choose tap water over sugary beverages and limit sugary and starchy foods. Avoid smoking and chewing tobacco.

**Through adulthood**

Talk your dentist about health-related diagnoses you may be undergoing and medications you may be taking as part of treatment. Avoid smoking and chewing tobacco. Choose tap water over sugary beverages and limit sugary and starchy foods.

**Learn more about how your oral health connects to your overall health at:**  
**DeltaDentalMN.org**

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