

Plaque and Tooth Decay For Children 6 Months and Older

1. What is plaque?

- Dental plaque is a sticky film that forms on the teeth and has germs in it.
- It builds up daily in the mouth and is hard to see.
- It is soft and can be brushed off.

2. What do the germs in plaque do?

- Plaque germs use sugar as food. Even a very small amount of sugar is enough for the germs to make an acid.
- It is the acid that attacks the enamel of the tooth, causing the tooth to break down.
- As the tooth breaks down and weakens, a cavity can form.
- Eating foods with sugar several times during the day can lead to more acid attacks.

3. How can plaque be removed from a child's teeth?

- The best way to remove plaque from the teeth and keep it off is by brushing at least twice a day.

4. Why is it important to use fluoride?

- Fluoride makes the tooth stronger and lowers the chance of cavities.
- The best way for a child to get fluoride's protection is by brushing with fluoride toothpaste following the advice from your child's dentist or doctor.
- Drinking water that contains the right amount of fluoride is very important to make sure that your child's developing baby teeth are getting enough fluoride.
- To find out if your water has the right amount of fluoride, ask your child's dentist or doctor.

5. How can tooth decay be prevented?

- Remember that tooth decay is a disease caused by germs that can be passed to the child by a parent or other caregiver who has had cavities.
- Brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Eat healthy foods and limit the amount of foods that have a lot of sugar by eating them only at meal times.
- Visit the dentist regularly on a schedule set by the dentist.
- Drink fluoridated water.
- Have fluoride varnish put on the baby teeth to help prevent tooth decay. Ask your baby's doctor or dentist about fluoride varnish.