

# Denti-Cal California Medi-Cal Dental Bulletin

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Initial Dental Checkup

## First Tooth or First Birthday Initial Dental Checkup

No child is too young for good oral health. Seeing children as early as six months, or the earlier of the eruption of the first tooth or the first birthday, has remarkable implications for the future of a child's oral health. Undetected and untreated tooth decay can lead to infection, loss of teeth, and expensive and mostly preventable emergency and restorative procedures at a very early age. Establishing a regular source of care and treating Denti-Cal's youngest beneficiaries allows providers the opportunity to discuss the importance of preventive dental care with parents. Seeing a child by his/her first tooth or first birthday also allows providers to detect early childhood caries and determine fluoride needs.

Seeing young children upon the eruption of a their first tooth and no later than their first birthday is recommended by the American Dental Association (ADA), the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

As providers, you have the opportunity to establish the foundation of a child's oral health and provide a valuable service to your community. Educating parents on their child's oral health needs is an invaluable part of that child's first visit to the dentist. This first visit is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate how to properly clean the child's teeth and advise parents on the adverse effects of unhealthy dietary habits. Although the initial dental examination of a child may not involve many teeth and can be done very quickly, the early detection of early childhood caries can result in a better dental experience for our youngest beneficiaries, free from the pain and anxiety a child would face during more invasive procedures.

Parents should be advised that if they give their baby a bottle at bedtime, they should only give water and gently wipe the baby's gums with a washcloth until the first tooth arrives. After the first tooth, they should brush baby teeth at least twice a day with an age-appropriate toothbrush using a "smear" of fluoridated toothpaste.

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If you would like assistance in referring young patients to another dentist willing to see young children, please feel free to contact the Denti-Cal Provider Customer Service Line at (800) 423-0507.

If you would like to learn more about the first tooth or first birthday recommendation, please consult the resources below.

## RESOURCES:

- **Denti-Cal Provider Bulletin: Dental Periodicity for Children**  
[www.denti-cal.ca.gov/provsrvcs/bulletins/Volume\\_26\\_Number\\_7.pdf](http://www.denti-cal.ca.gov/provsrvcs/bulletins/Volume_26_Number_7.pdf)
- **University of Iowa, Department of Pediatric Dentistry**  
[www.dentistry.uiowa.edu/pediatric/peds\\_videos/index.shtml](http://www.dentistry.uiowa.edu/pediatric/peds_videos/index.shtml)
- **American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry**  
Guideline on Caries-risk Assessment and Management for Infants, Children, and Adolescents  
[www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/G\\_CariesRiskAssessment.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_CariesRiskAssessment.pdf)

Guideline on Periodicity of Examination, Preventive Dental Services, Anticipatory Guidance/Counseling, and Oral Treatment for Infants, Children, and Adolescents

[www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/G\\_Periodicity.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_Periodicity.pdf) - Chart  
[www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/G\\_CariesRiskAssessmentChart.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_CariesRiskAssessmentChart.pdf)

Guideline on Infant Oral Health Care

[www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/G\\_InfantOralHealthCare.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_InfantOralHealthCare.pdf)

- **The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center**  
Dental Home: [www.mchoralhealth.org/highlights/dentalhome.html](http://www.mchoralhealth.org/highlights/dentalhome.html)  
Fluoride Varnish: [www.mchoralhealth.org/Topics/flvarnish.html](http://www.mchoralhealth.org/Topics/flvarnish.html)  
Dental Sealants: [www.mchoralhealth.org/Topics/ds.html](http://www.mchoralhealth.org/Topics/ds.html)
- **First Smiles For the Dental Team (Free!)**  
The purpose of this one (1) unit course is to improve the pediatric oral health and overall health of children, birth through 5 years old, including those with special needs, by instructing dental team members on how to screen, assess and provide preventive treatment to children, and provide anticipatory guidance on oral health to young children and their families.  
[timsonline.cde.org](http://timsonline.cde.org)