



**SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE  
FOUNDATION**

MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD



**INITIATIVE**

*a campaign for our youngest children*

15 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NW  
Hutchinson, MN 55350  
(800) 594-9480  
[info@swifoundation.com](mailto:info@swifoundation.com)  
[www.swifoundation.org](http://www.swifoundation.org)

One Connection. Unlimited Possibilities.

# Baby Teeth Facts

They are more important than you may know

## DID YOU KNOW:

Young children experiencing tooth pain often don't know the right words to describe their pain. Instead, they often act out with poor behavior. Even worse, children with chronic pain get so used to it they do not know life without it. They go to sleep with pain and wake up with pain. It affects their energy levels and even how they feel about themselves.

## Effects from Chronic Tooth Pain:

- The brain develops very quickly during the earliest years. Children who have continual toothaches are in a constant state of "fright or flight." Basically, what this means, is that they may eventually show the same signs as a child who has lived with long-term abuse and neglect.
- Recent studies have linked untreated cavities with Type II Diabetes, heart failure and even death due to brain abscesses (infections) that began in the mouth.
- Children (and adults) with rotten teeth and swollen gums smile less. They often end up feeling poorly about themselves and avoid making new friends.

**40%**  
of children entering  
kindergarten have  
cavities

## What to do:

- Before your baby has any teeth clean her mouth after each feeding with a clean, wet cloth, wiping gums and mouth. Continue to gently clean gums and teeth as they come through.
- For children over 2 use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste (ADA approved) on a small, soft bristled brush. Follow it up with a little floss. Cleaning the teeth at least twice a day, especially at bedtime, is really important for a happy smile.
- Children also need fluoride. If you are unsure about how your child gets fluoride ask your dentist, medical doctor or public health nurse.
- Eat nutritious meals and snacks. Spreading germs from someone else with cavities and food with a lot of sugar are two things that cause cavities in young children.
- NEVER put your child to bed with anything in a bottle or sippy cup except water. The liquids pool around the teeth and can cause tooth decay over time.
- **Bring your child to the dentist by age 1.** Dentists have special tools to remove germs before it decays the teeth. It is their job to keep mouths happy and healthy. Important: If you have an appointment and cannot make it, call and reschedule. When your child has an appointment that time is set aside for their care.

**28%**  
of preschool children  
have had cavities

**Jodi Maertens**  
Program Officer  
15 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NW  
Hutchinson, MN 55350  
(800) 594-9480  
[jodim@swifoundation.org](mailto:jodim@swifoundation.org)



Confirmed in Compliance with National Standards  
for U.S. Community Foundations

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer