



SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD



INITIATIVE

a campaign for our youngest children

15 3rd Avenue NW
Hutchinson, MN 55350
800-594-9480 or 320-587-4848
info@swifoundation.org
www.swifoundation.org

Did you know...

Baby teeth are important for your child's overall health and development. Many parents do not worry much about their children's baby (primary) teeth because they think they are "just baby teeth" and will fall out anyway.

Baby teeth have a purpose! They allow children to eat, speak properly, hold space for permanent teeth and guide the growth of the face...And dental problems can *hurt!*

Jodi Maertens

Program Officer
15 3rd Avenue NW
Hutchinson, MN 55350
(800) 594-9480
jodim@swifoundation.org



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Oral Health Tips: Infants and Toddlers

It's never too soon to start good oral health habits.

- 1** After each feeding gently wipe baby's gums and tongue with a moist baby washcloth or use an infant-size toothbrush, even before teeth erupt. Continue when teeth do appear.
- 2** When your child is old enough to sit up offer a cup for water or juice. Use only milk or formula in the bottle. Never offer juice or pop in bottles.
- 3** Never let a baby or toddler sleep with a bottle filled with anything but plain water.
- 4** Never dip or fill pacifiers with honey. The high sugar content of the honey contributes to tooth decay and certain bacteria in the honey can make young children sick.
- 5** Do not let toddlers sip all day on a bottle or sippy cup. Confine eating and drinking to meals and snack times. Constant sipping and snacking can lead to tooth decay.
- 6** Around twelve months wean your baby from the bottle to a cup. Choose to serve water instead of juice or pop.
- 7** Check your child's mouth and teeth on a regular basis for signs of decay or other problems. Have them see a dentist by their first birthday. If a dentist is no available encourage your doctor to look at your child's mouth.