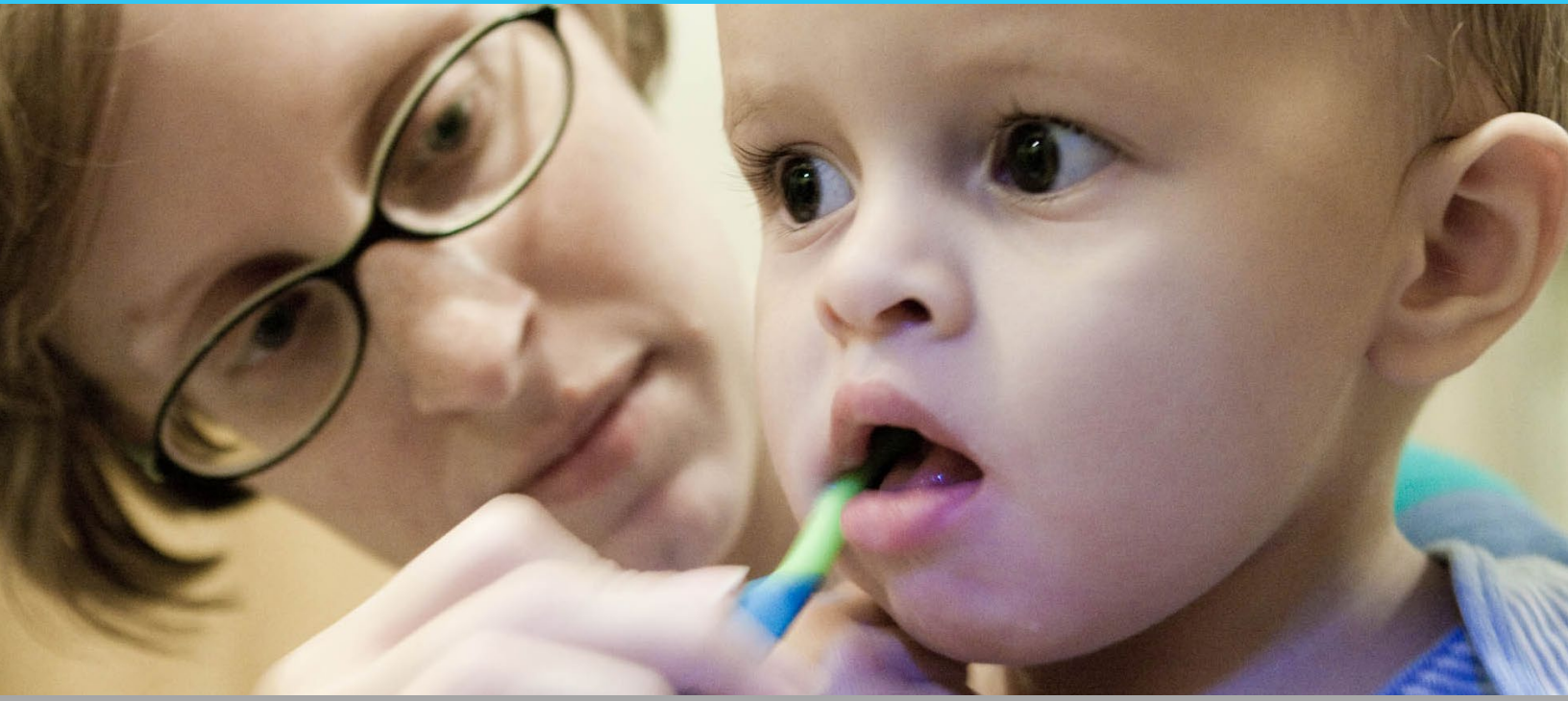


# Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles



## Taking Care of Your Baby's Oral Health

**T**aking good care of your baby's mouth and teeth is important. A baby's first tooth usually comes in at around age 6 to 10 months. Healthy primary (baby) teeth help children chew food and speak clearly.



*School readiness begins with health!*

Tips for keeping your baby's mouth and teeth healthy:

- Cleaning your baby's gums and teeth
  - Clean your baby's gums even before you can see the first tooth. Use a clean, damp washcloth to wipe the gums. Do this twice a day, especially after night feeding.
  - After your baby's first tooth comes in, use a baby toothbrush with soft bristles and a small head. Put a smear (size of a grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste on the toothbrush, and brush all sides of your baby's teeth.
  - Brush your baby's teeth in the morning and before bedtime.
- Using bottles and sippy cups
  - Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle or sippy cup filled with breast milk, infant formula, fruit juice, or other liquids besides water. Liquids that contain sugar can cause tooth decay.
- Using pacifiers
  - Clean the pacifier with soap and water.
  - Never clean a pacifier in your mouth before giving it to your baby. Germs that cause tooth decay can pass from your mouth to your baby's mouth.
  - If the pacifier gets worn out or breaks, get a new one.
  - Do not dip the pacifier in sweet foods like sugar, honey, or syrup.
  - Never put a pacifier on a string or ribbon around your baby's neck. It could choke your baby.



*Use a smear of fluoride toothpaste.*

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