Gently wipe the gums with a soft cloth or rubber finger toothbrush a few times a day for 2-3 seconds. Establishing a dental hygiene routine now makes it easier to maintain one as baby grows.

To avoid baby tooth decay:
- Don’t put your baby to sleep with a bottle of milk or juice, or coat a pacifier with sugar or honey. These sugary substances can feed bacteria, causing cavities or even tooth loss later in life.

Help your child brush, while teaching how to spit out the non-fluoride toothpaste. Transition to a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste once spitting becomes consistent. Adult help is still necessary at this stage.

While your child may be perfectly able to brush and floss independently, adult supervision is still important to ensure that it gets done—and that proper technique is consistently used.

Ideally, your child should have a sound understanding of home dental care by now, but it’s common to still have room to improve. By age 12 or 13, check with your dentist to confirm that all permanent teeth are in place, with the exception of the wisdom teeth. Your dentist should continue to monitor for wisdom teeth through the later teenage or early adulthood years, as they may need to be pulled and/or surgically removed from beneath the gum line.
**TIME LINE**

**0-4 months**
(or before the first teeth come in)

Gently wipe the gums with a soft cloth or rubber finger toothbrush a few times a day for 2-3 seconds. Establishing a dental hygiene routine now makes it easier to maintain one as baby grows.

Continue to wipe the gums, while also cleaning teeth surfaces. From here on out, the oral health routine should occur at least twice a day, especially after eating and before sleep. It’s important to remove cavity-causing plaque from the teeth as soon as they appear.

Once teeth begin filling up the mouth, graduate to a soft child’s toothbrush. Until spitting is possible, use fluoride-free toothpaste or the tiniest smear of regular fluoride toothpaste. Parents should continue to help with brushing at this stage.

Help your child brush, while teaching how to spit out the non-fluoride toothpaste. It’s a good idea to introduce a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste once spitting becomes consistent. Once teeth are fitting together snugly, start helping your child to floss, working up to at least once a day. Baby’s first dentist appointment

The first trip to the dentist can be scheduled as soon as the first tooth appears, but no later than baby’s 1st birthday. Ask your dentist about the recommended exam schedule, typically every 6 months to once a year.

While your child may be perfectly able to brush and floss independently, adult supervision is still important to ensure that it gets done – and that proper technique is consistently used.

Ideally, your child should have a sound understanding of home dental care by now, but it’s common to still have room to improve. By age 12 or 13, check with your dentist to confirm that all permanent teeth are in place, with the exception of the wisdom teeth. Your dentist should continue to monitor for wisdom teeth through the later teenage or early adulthood years, as they may need to be pulled and/or surgically removed from beneath the gum line.

**Avoid baby tooth decay**
Don’t put your baby to sleep with a bottle of milk or juice, or coat a pacifier with sugar or honey. These sugary substances can feed bacteria, causing cavities or even tooth loss later in life.

**Make oral health fun**
Try testing your child’s skills with disclosing tablets, which turn harmless dyes of various colors to expose any leftover plaque.

Dronzila a mobile app – such as United Concordia’s Chomper Chums – that features fun characters to motivate kids and teach proper technique. UnitedConcordia.com/ChomperChums

**A note about braces**
Even if your child’s teeth appear to be straight, it’s not a bad idea to consult an orthodontist. When the child is around age 7, this specialist can evaluate if there are any structural issues with the teeth, possibly recommending a retainer or other procedures.

**United Concordia Dental**

**Sources:**
1. Child Dental Health: MedlinePlus; March 2015
2. Your Child's Dental Health: A Timeline; Texas A&M University Health Science Center; March 2016
3. Dental Hygiene: How to Care for Your Baby’s Teeth; familydoctor.org; June 2016
4. When to Start Flossing; Oral B; 2016
5. Take Care of Your Child’s Teeth; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; September 2016
6. Eruption Charts; American Dental Association; 2016
7. The Life of a Tooth; The Academy of General Dentistry; 2016
8. Infant and Children's Oral Health; New York State Department of Health; 2005
9. Four Developmental Milestones in Your Child’s Oral Health; Colgate

**Important disclosures:** www.UnitedConcordia.com/disclaimers