


2 Years Late

Preschool was exciting for Ben,* with lots of new things to do and lots of new friends. A three-year-old's dream come true. Ben had a problem though, his mouth hurt. It hurt so much that sometimes it was hard to listen to the teacher or to eat a snack, especially when they had carrots. His teacher said carrots were healthy and he had to try them. Ben had another worry. His preschool had a rule that said he needed to go to the dentist and he was scared. His mom seemed a bit scared too, but she read him stories about going to the dentist and talked about being brave.

The dental office was so cool with lots of interesting tools. The dentist was really nice even when Ben cried. She counted Ben's teeth. He had cavities. LOTS of cavities! The dentist told him that's what made his mouth hurt. Although it was too late to save Ben from the pain of bad teeth, the good news was, the dentist could fix them! The dentist gave Ben something to help him sleep, and when he woke up, his teeth were fixed! It took a while for Ben's mouth to feel better, but now he can eat CARROTS!

** Although we changed his name, Ben* is a real boy who experienced cavities on 17 of his 20 teeth. Most could have been prevented with earlier dental care.*

Preparing for the First Dental Visit

- Start early by wiping out your baby's mouth after each feeding with a soft, clean, moist washcloth. Start using a infant toothbrush  when teeth start erupting.
- Talk about the upcoming visit or play dentist with a doll. Read books about going to the dentist. Even if your child is not talking yet, they can hear the words you say and sense your feelings. Stay away from words like, "pain or hurt."
- Write down questions or concerns you may have. It is normal for a child to get upset at a dentist office. Your list of questions will help you remember, while you are consoling your child.



Early Childhood Dental Network
of west central Minnesota

Learn more at [http:// ecdnet.wcif.org](http://ecdnet.wcif.org)



Good Reasons



See a Dentist

by Age



Recommended by the American Dental Association





Find a dentist you and your child like.

- Ask your dentist if they see young children or if you can bring your child to your next visit. Also ask if there is a charge for the appointment.
- If your dentist does not see young children, ask them to suggest a dentist who will or talk to your baby's doctor.
- The dental office you choose should be:
 - Friendly to both you and your child.
 - Know how to deal with young children and their development.
 - Gentle towards your child, even if she cries or wiggles.
 - Open to answer your questions.



Catch dental issues before they become a problem.

Baby teeth need care, too!

At your child's first visit, the dentist will look for:



- How the teeth are developing
- Teething problems
- How the top and bottom jaws come together (the bite.)
- The health of the gums and cheeks
- Factors that affect the risk of cavities.

The first visit is also important for you to understand your role in the health of your child's teeth. This includes caring for teeth between visits, fluoride use and your child's food choices.



Protect your child's smile for a lifetime.

Baby teeth are an important part of how your child grows!

Besides chewing, baby teeth have a purpose.

- They make space for permanent teeth.
- Help children to talk
- And give facial structure.

Living with untreated cavities can lead to:

- Problems in school
- Behavior problems
- Chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease

And isn't his smile worth it?

