



## for Infants and Toddlers

### 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 that 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. No matter if they are baby or permanent teeth, dental problems *can* hurt!

MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD



INITIATIVE

*a campaign for our youngest children*



**For more information on children's dental care or how to access dental care in west central Minnesota see our website: [ecd.n.wcif.org](http://ecd.n.wcif.org)**

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Never let a baby or toddler sleep with a bottle filled with anything but plain water.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Around twelve months, wean from the bottle to a cup.
- ◆ Serve water instead of juice or pop.
- ◆ 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 not available, encourage your doctor to look at your child's mouth.

**Make brushing fun by singing while brushing your child's teeth!**

### Smile

(Tune: On Top of Old Smokie)

Whenever you smile  
You brighten my day  
so make someone happy  
and smile today.

If someone is crying  
or they're feeling blue  
soon they'll feel better  
with a smile from you.

