

## Cleaning Baby's Mouth/Teeth

Baby teeth are important

- They help a child learn how to speak properly.
- Baby teeth help to build a child's self esteem.
- Baby teeth make sure that there is enough room for permanent teeth to come in.
- Baby teeth are important for feeding and good nutrition in children.
- Tooth decay can cause infection, poor nutrition, poor weight gain and early loss of baby teeth that could damage permanent teeth.

Also:

- Before your baby is born, it has twenty primary teeth below the gums that develop in the fourth month of pregnancy.
- At about six months, your baby's teeth will begin to push through the gums. It is common for babies to drool and cry more when their teeth begin to come in.

Therefore:

- Starting the first few days after birth, take a wet cloth and wipe it over your baby's gums after each feeding.
- Milk and juice left to pool in baby's mouth lead to early childhood cavities.
- Never give your baby a pacifier dipped in soda or other sugar filled drinks.
- Avoid putting your baby to bed with a bottle. Babies who fall asleep with milk or juices tend to develop baby bottle tooth decay. That is decay that forms when children are young and the teeth are appearing.
- As babies' teeth appear, begin cleaning teeth and gums with a child-size soft bristle toothbrush and water twice a day.
- Soothe a teething baby with a teething ring, avoiding those containing liquid. A wet washcloth placed in the freezer for 30 minutes and plastic teething rings placed in the freezer are handy teething aids.
- Never tie a teething ring around a baby's neck.
- Pain can be relieved by gently rubbing the baby's gums with a clean finger or wet gauze. Teething gels are not recommended. Use pain medications only with a doctor's recommendation.