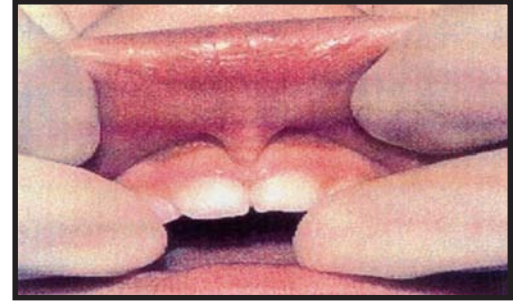


Lift the Lip

Tooth decay in children under age three is preventable. If found early, it can be stopped and even reversed. Parents/caregivers can be taught to “Lift the Lip” to check their child’s teeth for early signs of tooth decay.

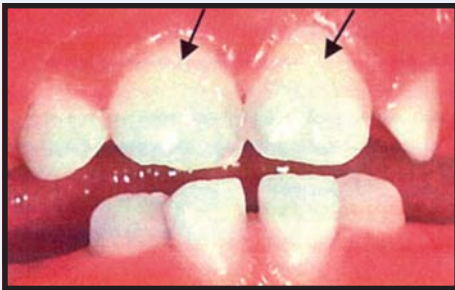
Two adults sit facing each other with the child’s head tilted back into one of their laps. The other adult can help hold wiggly arms and legs. Place the head so you can see the four upper front teeth. Now have the adult in whose lap the child’s head lies gently lift the lip.

Focus on the four upper front teeth. This is where you are most likely to find signs of possible dental problems: visible plaque, white or brown spots. Look at both the front and the back of the four upper front teeth, near the roof of the mouth.

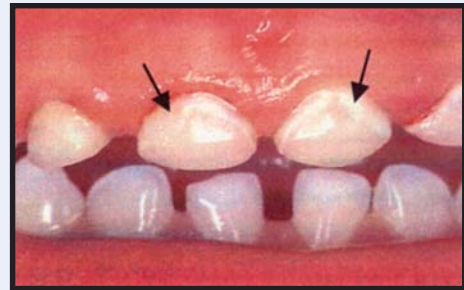


As new teeth come in the mouth they will need to be checked the same way.

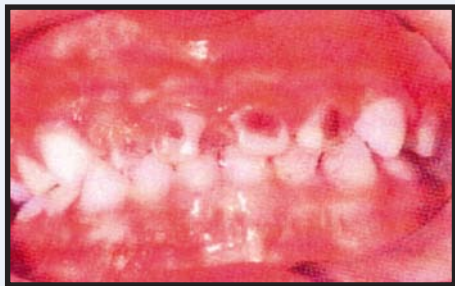
So what does a tooth problem look like?



1. Visible Plaque is a thick layer of germs and food. Decay starts to form under plaque that is not regularly cleaned away.



2. Early decay first shows as white spots or a white line along the upper part of the tooth closest to the gums.



3. Moderate decay shows as large brown spots that are really holes in the teeth.



4. Severe decay is obvious because the teeth begin to chip off and have a broken appearance, sometimes looking like little dark nubs.

“Lift the Lip” only takes a few minutes. If the child cries or fusses, it’s okay because the child’s mouth will be wide open for viewing.

If you see any of these problems the child should be referred to a dentist. Early problems can many times be reversed with fluoride or repaired by a dentist. If left untreated the child may require hospitalization for treatment.

Remember to “Lift the Lip” and check your child’s upper front teeth at least once a month.

