



Dental Resource Center
2138 Madison Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43604
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Antibiotics

Antibiotics can affect my child's teeth?

Some antibiotic medicines contain a substance called tetracycline, which is very harmful to developing teeth.

- For example, if tetracycline is given to babies or children under age 10, it may cause a yellow discoloration of the secondary teeth.

Even drugs taken during pregnancy can affect your baby's teeth! The antibiotic tetracycline can cause defects and discoloration to the enamel of your baby's teeth if taken during the last three months of pregnancy.

- If the drug is given to a pregnant woman, the baby born may have discolored primary teeth.

These defects will even be seen in the child's permanent teeth.

Any type of liquid or chewable medicine may affect the child's teeth. They usually contain sugar. It's also best to avoid chewable vitamins too – these are loaded with sugar. If you **MUST** give them to your child, do so just before a meal so that the food can be used to clean the teeth of any sugary residue left behind by the vitamins.



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Sugary Medicine and Children with Special Health Care Needs

There is an increased risk of dental decay in children who frequently need to take sugary medicine. The sugars combine with bacterial plaque and attack the enamel of teeth for about 20 minutes. After many such attacks, the tooth begins to decay. Cleaning the child's teeth after taking sugary medication can reduce the opportunity for tooth decay.

Children with special health care needs often experience oral health problems. Medication to treat seizures in children can cause the gums to enlarge. In addition, trauma occurs to the teeth more often in children with seizures. Older children and young adults with Down Syndrome often have periodontal disease, dry mouth and bite problems. Some children with developmental disabilities have tooth enamel defects, gum infections, bite problems and get their teeth very late. Children who have frequent vomiting and special diets have increased dental cavities.

Many parents lack confidence in their ability to provide oral care for their children with special health problems. It may also be difficult to clean their children's teeth. In addition, there may be a lack of dentists trained or willing to provide dental care to these children. As these children often have other special problems, oral health is their least concern. However, oral health problems can be severe.

It is important for parents to provide good oral health care every day for their children with special health needs and consult a dentist who is trained and willing to see their child as needed.