



Your Child's First Dental Visit

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Jack P Horbal, DDS
Kerstin E Horbal, DDS
6033 N Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60660
773-275-0110

When and Why

When should your child's first visit be?

"First visit by first birthday." The ideal time as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Dental Association and the Academy of General Dentistry is approximately one year of age. Not all children are ready at 1 year; use your judgment. We would like to see them for their first visit by age 2.

Why so early?

The most important reason is to establish and begin a good prevention program. Healthy teeth are important in nutrition, speech development, creating/maintaining space for the permanent teeth, and self-esteem. Establishing good hygiene habits and regular dental visits is an important part of maintaining a healthy mouth.

Another important reason is early detection of caries. More than 1 in 4 US children have their first cavity by age 4, some as early as age 2. Of big concern is Early Childhood Caries (formerly known as Baby Bottle Tooth Decay or Nursing Caries). Fortunately, cavities are almost entirely preventable with good oral hygiene.

How Do We Prepare

How do we prepare?

- Talk to your child about what to expect at their first visit. Use positive, kid-friendly language so that they are excited for their first visit, but also understand what will happen.
- Read books and/or watch children's programs about going to the dentist.
- Be positive when you go or talk about your visit to the dentist. Children take their cues from their parents; if you seem nervous when you visit the dentist, the child can become anxious for their first visit.
- Schedule your appointment for a time when the child is usually in a good mood - avoid snack time or nap time.
- Bring along their favorite toy or blanket. Having something familiar when in a new environment can help make the experience more comfortable.

What to Expect

The First Visit

A child's first visit to the dentist is usually short, which allows the child to meet the dentist in a friendly and non-threatening way. We like to see children on their own, but understand that this is not possible with every child. In those cases, the parent may be asked to come into the treatment room with their child to provide reassurance and may even be asked to sit in the dental chair with their child.

What will happen?

- Gentle, but thorough examination.
- Teeth-cleaning – polishing teeth to remove plaque, tartar, and stains
- Fluoride application.

After seeing the child we will go over any findings with you, answer any questions you might have, as well as review the following topics:

1. Oral hygiene practices
2. Fluoride use
3. Oral habits – thumb-sucking, tongue thrusting, lip sucking
4. Teething
5. The relationship between nutrition and oral health.
6. Schedule of visits.

1. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
2. American Dental Association
3. www.drjay.com/1stvisit.htm
4. Aetna Ins Co