



Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

What is Baby Bottle Tooth Decay (BBTC)?

- Decay in infants and children
 - Also known as nursing bottle decay, baby bottle syndrome, or early childhood cavities
- It can destroy the teeth
 - Most often occurs in the upper front teeth
 - Other teeth may also be affected
- Occurs when a child is put to bed with a bottle at night containing any sugar
 - Formula, juice, milk, or soda (heaven forbid!)
 - A breast fed child is only at risk for BBTC once other foods are introduced into the diet
- Liquid pools around these teeth all night long feeding bacteria, causing decay
 - Reduced saliva at night
 - Reduced swallowing at night
- Mild cases look like white spots/lines at the gumline
 - Mild cases progress to severe cases in a short time
 - Severe cases present with rotting, broken, black nubs of teeth remaining
- Decay can start as soon as teeth erupt into the mouth, with severe cases seen as early as 18 months

How do I avoid BBTC?

- Never put a child to bed with a bottle, find other ways to get your child to sleep at night
- After night feedings, wipe out baby's mouth with wash cloth, soft toothbrush, or finger brush
- Do not put juice or sugary liquid in sippy cup and allow child to carry around taking frequent sips
 - Severely decayed front teeth can occur anytime frequent or night time sugars are given
- Do not give child more than 4-6 oz of juice a day. Water is better.
- Never give young children sodas
- As an expectant mother or new mother, chew sugar free gum containing Xylitol
 - Xylitol prevents transmission of bacteria from your mouth to your child's mouth
- Schedule your first visit to the pediatric dentist before your child's first birthday

Why should I avoid BBTC?

- Baby teeth are important
 - These are the teeth he will have when personality and self-image are forming
 - Baby teeth hold space for the permanent teeth, reducing the need for braces
 - Important for speech and chewing
 - Pain and suffering occur from cavities and toothaches
 - Having severe decay as a young child is a risk factor for significant problems with cavities as an adult and permanent tooth loss
- Dental work necessary to fix BBTD is expensive

Reminder

- Never put a child to bed with any sugary liquid or formula
- Limit amount of juice (if any) given each day
- Do not give young children and infants soda
- It is not just what you give your child, but when and how often
- Do not give child prolonged, frequent access to sugary liquids or formula
- Schedule your baby's first visit to the dentist before age one to learn how to keep them cavity free!!