

## Your Child's First Dental Visit

When should your child first see a dentist? Dental experts at the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) say the ideal time is six months after the first tooth erupts. This should be before your child's first birthday.

At this time, the dentist can demonstrate how to clean your child's teeth properly, provide information on feeding practices for good dental care, and explain how to evaluate potentially adverse habits such as thumb-sucking.

### Prepare Your Child

If possible, schedule morning appointments, when young children are alert and fresh.

Prepare a preschooler or older child for the visit by giving him or her a general idea of what to expect. Explain why it is important to go to the dentist. Build excitement and understanding.

### Before You Go

Discuss your questions and concerns with the dentist before the exam, the AGD says. Remember that your interpretations and expectations toward dental visits can be quite different from your child's. Be honest with your view of the dentist. If you have dental anxieties, be careful to not relate those fears or dislikes to the child. Parents need to provide moral support by staying calm while in the dental exam room. Children can pick up parents' anxieties and become anxious themselves.

### What Happens During the Visit?

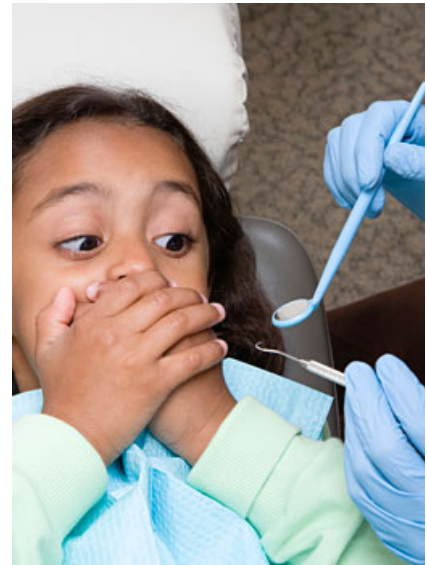
Most initial office visits are to help acquaint the child with the dentist. The visit will likely include the following:

- Your child's teeth, jaw, bite, gums, and oral tissues will be examined.
- Proper home-cleaning procedures will be demonstrated.
- The pediatric dentist will look for potential problems and check overall oral growth and development.
- Child's medical history will be carefully reviewed by the pediatric dentist and preventive measures for dental disease will be discussed.

\*Fluoride needs will be evaluated—supplements may be necessary.

“Early Dental Visits May Help Prevent Problems Down the Road.” Know Your Teeth, Academy of General Dentistry.

<http://www.knowyourteeth.com/infobites/abc/article/?abc=E&iid=296&aid=1172> Accessed 2013.



“When Should My Child First See a Dentist?” Know Your Teeth, Academy of General Dentistry.

<http://www.knowyourteeth.com/infobites/abc/article/?abc=W&iid=296&aid=1186>.

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“Baby’s First Teeth.” American Dental Association.

[http://www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/patient\\_11.pdf](http://www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/patient_11.pdf) Accessed 2013.

“Children’s Dental Visits: Parents, Prepare Yourselves.” Know Your Teeth, Academy of General Dentistry.

<http://www.agd.org/public/oralhealth/Default.asp?IssID=344&Topic=D&ArtID=1224http://www.knowyourteeth.com/infobites/abc/article/?abc=C&iid=344&aid=1224>.

Accessed 2013.