

Start Early: Healthy Smiles for Life

Caregiver Checklist



Oral Health Screening Tool for Children 18 - 36 Months

The checklist below is designed to help monitor your child's dental development. If you **answer "No" to three or more** questions talk to your oral health provider. If you do not have a dentist please contact our Children's Oral Health Program at 625-5984 or 1-888-294-6630 x 5984. We offer assessments and fluoride varnish applications for eligible children.

YES	NO		
		If your child is between 18-24 months, does he/she have at least 12 teeth? OR If your child is between 25-36 months, does he/she have at least 16 teeth?	By 18 months, most children have between 12-16 teeth, and by 36 months, they have between 18 and 20 teeth. The first teeth to come in are the front teeth, followed by the teeth in the back.
		Are your child's teeth cleaned every day by an adult?	Use a small soft brush moistened with water or non-fluoridated toothpaste to clean your child's teeth twice a day. Before age 3 a rice-grain size of fluoridated toothpaste can be used if recommended by a dental professional or your local health unit. A pea sized amount can be used after the age of 3. Do not let your child eat or swallow toothpaste.
		Are your child's teeth white and shiny?	Even toddlers can get cavities. Once a month, lift your child's lip and look for chalky white or brown spots on the teeth. If you notice any spots, chipped or broken teeth, take your child to see a dental provider.
		Has your child been seen by a dentist or dental hygienist?	Children should have their teeth checked by a dentist or a dental hygienist by their first birthday so that any problems are caught early.
		Does your child drink mostly from a regular cup (not a sippy cup)?	By 18 months, children should be drinking from a cup without a lid. Don't let your child constantly sip from a bottle or sippy cup unless filled with water. Frequent drinking or sipping on milk, juice or anything sweetened with sugar may cause cavities.
		Does your child sleep without a bottle?	A breastfed child should be taken off the breast when they are done nursing. If your child uses a bottle to fall asleep, fill it with plain water.
		Does your child have set times for meals and snacks?	Offer snacks at set times, 2 to 3 times a day. Limit starchy or sugary foods and drinks. Frequent snacking can cause cavities especially if foods are sticky and sweet. Some examples of healthy snacks are cheese, whole grain crackers, yogurt, fresh fruit and vegetables. If your child is thirsty between meals, plain water is best.
		Does your child use fluoride e.g. receive supplements, professional applications or use fluoridated toothpaste?	The communities within Thunder Bay and District have a non-fluoridated water supply. Fluoride helps to strengthen the teeth making them more resistant to decay.

The checklist is adapted from the Paediatric Dental Screening Instrument developed by the Community Dental Health Services Research, University of Toronto.