

# Toddlers' Teeth

Adults take their daily dental routine for granted. When it comes to babies and toddlers, it is a completely different matter. It is probably the most important phase in life when it comes to **dental** care.

**D**ental care should actually begin before birth, when the mother should be **mindful** of **nutrition**. It is essential from the start to clean the child's gums either with a soft **damp cloth** or with a baby toothbrush using clear water. As soon as the first teeth appear, use a baby toothbrush with a very small amount of toothpaste. At the beginning, it might be better to use a non-fluoride toothpaste, as many children can't control the **swallowing reflex** at an early age. There are, of course, other things that should be **taken into account** ...

**Pharmacy customer:** Hello, do you speak English?

**PTA:** Hello. Yes, I do. What can I do for you?

**My little boy has just got his first teeth and I was wondering about dental care. You know, brushing or not, or using a soft damp cloth, as I have been doing up to now.**

Do you have a baby toothbrush?

**No. I was thinking of buying one, but I thought it would be more sensible to come to you instead of going to a drugstore.**

I agree with you there, not just because I work here! So, here is a baby toothbrush.

**Thank you. What about toothpaste?**

Would you like one with fluoride or without?

**Oh! Where is the difference?**

The non-fluoride toothpaste has the **advantage** that, if the child swallows it, it won't do any harm to the child.

**I thought that fluoride was important for the teeth.**

If children get too much, either by swallowing toothpaste, or taking fluoride supplements, they might get fluorosis.

**Fluorosis, what's that?**

Fluorosis is caused by getting too much fluoride when the teeth are

still in the **gums**. It is a harmless cosmetic change that causes white **specks** or streaks on the tooth. If it's really bad, brown marks and **pitting** can appear.

**What if I use fluoridated toothpaste?**

You should use only a very small amount, about the size of a **grain of rice**. Make sure he doesn't swallow it.

**What if he does?**

Don't worry! It's okay in small amounts. How old is he?

**He's six months old.**

Have you considered going to a dentist with him?

**No. Why?**

Studies have shown that children in early dental care programs have fewer problems when they are older. It is less expensive to go regularly, rather than waiting for the first problems.

**I hadn't thought of that!**

Does your child have a **sippy cup**?

**Yes, we've just started him on it. Why? Is it bad for him?**

If he is being **breast-fed**, you don't have to give him juice or milk. Make sure that juice is **diluted**, and no milk or juice before going to sleep, as this is asking for **cavities**!

**Okay, I'll remember that. Thank you so much.**

**Don't mention it!** I know what it's like when you start with teeth-brushing in babies! ■

*Catherine Croghan,  
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

## VOCABULARY

toddler	Kleinkind
mindful	achtsam
nutrition	Ernährung
damp	feucht
cloth	Lappen, Tuch
swallowing reflex	Schluckreflex
taken into account	mitberücksichtigt
sensible	vernünftig
drugstore	Drogerie
advantage	Vorteil
gums	Zahnfleisch
specks	Flecken
pitting	Oberflächenfehler
grain of rice	Reiskorn
sippy cup	Schnabeltasse
breast-fed	gestillt
diluted	verdünnt
cavities	Zahnhöhlen
Don't mention it	keine Ursache



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