Assess Risk Factors for Infant Caries:
- Sibling dental decay before age 5 or active maternal caries
- Use of bottle in crib or before sleeping
- Frequent exposure to sweets/juice/sticky foods in diet
- Inadequate routine brushing/cleaning
- Inadequate fluoride in water or supplementation
- Chalky white spots on teeth

Fluoride
Fluoride adjustment in water reduces caries up to 50% daily supplementation varies by age.

Fluoride Supplement Dosage Schedule
Age | <0.3 ppm | 0.3-0.6 | >0.6
---|---|---|---
Birth to 6 months | 0 mg | 0 mg | 0 mg
6 months to 3 years | 0.25 mg | 0 mg | 0 mg
3 years to 6 years | 0.5 mg | 0.25 mg | 0 mg
6 years to 16 years | 1 mg | 0.5 mg | 0 mg

From the American Dental Association Council on Dental Therapeutics, 1994. Based on primary drinking water fluoride concentration in ppm.

Fluoride is available in many concentrations. If you are in doubt about the fluoride supplements available in your area, contact a local pharmacist for advice.

Child/Infant Oral Exam Technique Tips
- Position child on parent’s lap facing parent
- Position your chair so that you are knee to knee with parent
- Inform child that you are going to play a game counting his/her teeth
- Lower child back onto your lap (so still in contact with parent)
- Examine gums and high risk surfaces of teeth
- Count the teeth out loud throughout the exam like it is a game
- Refer all children with positive findings, otherwise by age 3

Quick Guide to Early Childhood Dental Care

0-6 months
- Tooth eruption usually begins between 6 months and 10 months and continues for 2 years.
- Provide information about teething to parents
- Assess infant for risk factors for caries (see above)
- Counsel about proper cleaning of erupting teeth: use a washcloth, pea size of toothpaste
- Explain importance of no bottle in bed
- Assess need for fluoride supplementation (bottled water does not usually contain fluoride)
- Counsel to introduce the cup at 7 months
- Give pacifier and thumb sucking information

7-11 months
- Lower incisors erupt first at about 8 months, upper incisors at about 10 months
- Reinforce previous information, especially no bottle in bed
- Encourage cup use beginning at about 7 months
- Remind caretaker to begin cleaning child’s teeth as soon as teeth erupts
- Give nutritional counseling: limit/dilute juice, sweets

12-24 months
- First molars begin to erupt at about 16 months, canines at 20 months. Critical period for enamel formation of permanent incisors is between 18 and 24 months.
- Reinforce nutrition information, use of fluoride supplements (if needed) and BID brushing by parent (introduce soft bristle toothbrush)
- Examine teeth at every visit
- Refer to dentist if early caries or signs of decay noted

25-36 months
- Second molars erupt at approximately 25 months (last primary teeth to erupt).
- Inform dental visits to begin at age 3
- Evaluate fluoride supplementation – dose change at age 3
- Reinforce nutrition and home-care instructions (children should be supervised while cleaning own teeth)

Teeth Are Our Life
Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts