


## All About Teeth - the inside story

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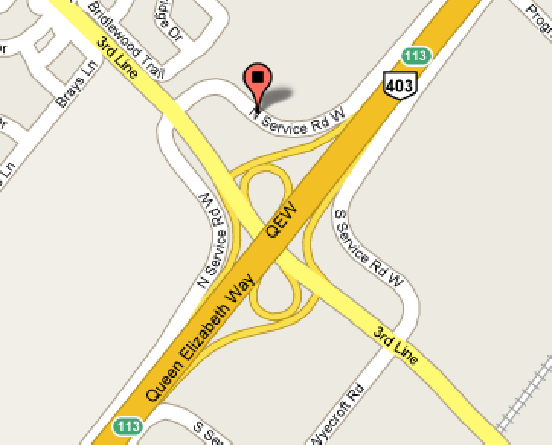


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### Tooth Care

- **Cleaning teeth** is the best way to keep them in top condition. Brushing not only removes particles of food but also removes plaque that causes tooth decay. Even babies benefit from tooth cleaning.
- **You need a toothbrush in good condition, no harder than medium.** It should have a small head so that you can get behind back teeth.
- **Toothpastes contain mild abrasives that help to remove plaque and polish teeth.** Some also contain fluoride. In addition to fluoride in drinking water (Oakville water is fluoridated), or as diet supplements, a child's teeth should be brushed with a toothpaste containing fluoride.
- **Clean teeth at least twice a day, after breakfast and before bed.** Clean all the teeth, cheek-side and tongue-side. Use a soft brush and a small amount of fluoridated toothpaste on your child's teeth twice a day - after breakfast and before bed.
- **Dental flossing is not necessary for baby teeth.** Good tooth brushing habits and diet awareness are most important at this time. An electric toothbrush is acceptable and may help some younger children, especially those that do not spend much time brushing.

### Fluoride

Fluoride works in the mouth by chemically bonding with the tooth enamel, making teeth more resistant to decay. It is especially effective in building up the resistance of newly erupting teeth and in stopping cavities that are just beginning to form, (a newly discovered process called remineralization).

Fluoride protection is greatest during infancy and early childhood but continues through adult life.

With fluoride, for example:

- ✓ children can have 65% fewer cavities;
- ✓ children can have up to 90% fewer tooth extractions;
- ✓ 20% of teens will be cavity free; and
- ✓ adults can have 40 - 50% fewer decayed, missing or filled teeth.



**Twice a year at dental checkups, Dr. Hune can apply a fluoride gel to children's teeth. Children who are particularly prone to cavities may use fluoridic rinses and mouthwashes containing fluoride at home.**

### **Sealants**

Children's teeth may now be made more resistant by the use of sealants made of a special plastic. This plastic seals the deep, rough biting surfaces of the molar teeth creating hard and smooth surfaces which are more resistant to decay. Dentists usually apply sealants to newly erupting permanent molars of cavity prone children. The procedure is painless, rapid and can eliminate the need for filling in cavity prone back teeth.

- Your toothbrush should be replaced every three months (once bristles curve) to enable your child to clean properly. Fissure sealants are non-toxic, safe but can be worn down. Fissure sealants should be inspected at recall re-assessment visits and can be re-applied. Children born in the 80's and 90's now can arrive as adults mostly cavity free,. (a cavity free generation) with the use of bonded sealants.

### **Starting Early**

Contrary to common belief, a child's dental care does not start with the first visit to the dentist at about 3 years of age but right after birth, if not before.

Proper feeding habits and cleaning of the teeth as soon as they erupt unto the mouth are of great importance. Healthy and well-formed baby teeth provide a necessary foundation for the permanent dentition.

### **Prenatal Care: Caring for Future Teeth**

By the third month of gestation, baby teeth have begun to form under the fetal gums. Hereditary actually has far less to do with decay resistance than environment.

The ability of teeth to resist decay depends largely on how well stocked the teeth are with minerals when they are formed. Poor mineralization (calcification) can result when a mother suffers an infection or fever during pregnancy. In such cases, devoted care to the child's teeth after birth is even more critical. The same is true if the baby is ill during the first year of life.

Good nutrition during pregnancy is obviously important overall, but unless the mother is severely undernourished, her unborn baby will derive from her bloodstream all the minerals needed to form healthy teeth. Even if the mother's diet is deficient in calcium and phosphorus, some will be removed from mother's bones to meet the baby's needs.

### **Caring for Infant Teeth**

Breastfeeding is preferable to bottle feeding mostly from a medical point of view but paedodontists and orthodontists do suggest it as well, mostly because bottle feeding can easily become habit forming.

If you bottle feed, you may need to add a certain amount of sugar or syrup to the formula. This should be omitted as soon as your medical doctor permits it.

At 10-12 months when your child can grasp and drink with a cup the formula bottle should be discarded. Your child should now be able to obtain all the necessary nutrient quantities using a cup. If fluids are necessary, plain water in the bottle, especially at night, is recommended.

### **Cleaning Baby Teeth**



**Dr. Hune advises parents to start the cleaning process in early infancy.**

Each day a parent should wipe the gum pads in the child's mouth with a small piece of gauze wrapped around the finger. The corner of a wet washcloth will also suffice. This early imitation will accustom the child to the cleaning process.

When older as teeth are present a small soft bristled toothbrush can be used. Toothpaste is not necessary until around 2 years of age. Cleaning a young child's teeth can be done anywhere - a bedroom, living room, den or wherever the parent and child are most comfortable is the best spot.

By about age three, most children have all their 20 primary teeth. Paedodontists encourage children to develop the tooth brushing habit early but counsel parents to aid in this practice until proper dexterity develops.

Make tooth brushing fun, make it a game; encourage as well as supervise and your child will develop good habits. Also remember children learn by examples and they constantly want to please their parents during these early years.

### **Growing up with straight teeth**

Today approximately 50% of orthodontics can be avoided if the problems are detected early and treated early. Paedodontists have determined that many orthodontic problems are not hereditary but are caused by factors occurring in early childhood. Using new procedures collectively known as "Interceptive Orthodontics", Paedodontists can help ensure that as the child's permanent teeth come in, they will be properly aligned in the mouth.

## Baby and Adult Teeth

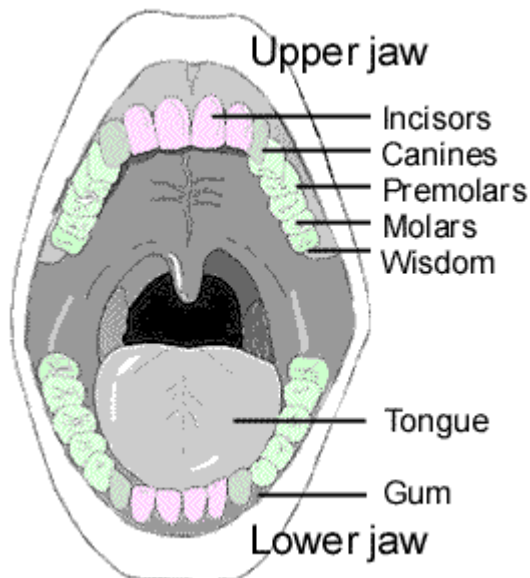
### First Teeth

The first set are called "Baby" Teeth or "Milk Teeth". The first of the Baby teeth, of which there are 20 in all, start to come through the gums when a baby is about 6 months old. By the age of 18 months, most children have a full set of teeth. Teething can be uncomfortable and many babies like to chew on hard or cold objects.

Adult teeth are hidden away in the gums in the preschool years and begin to come through around the age of six. The baby teeth drop out to make space for adult teeth, in the order in which they appeared in the baby mouth.

At this point the Tooth Fairy becomes an important personage in a family, bringing money in exchange for baby teeth.

### Adult teeth



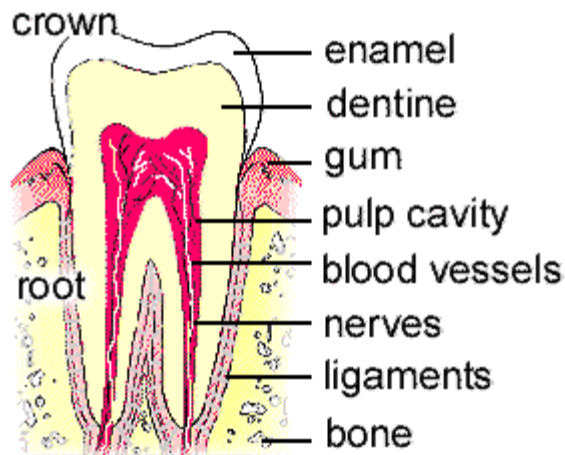
There is more room in an adult mouth for the 32 teeth that make up a full set.

Adult Teeth:

- Incisors
- Canines
- Premolars
- Molars
- Wisdom Teeth

The four wisdom teeth are the last adult teeth to come through, around the age of 21. Some people have fewer or no wisdom teeth, but others do not have enough room in their jaw to fit in these last four teeth. In these cases the teeth may need to be removed by a dentist.

### Inside a Tooth



A tooth is made of layers of material, which support and protect it.

The tooth fits into a socket or hole in the jawbone, surrounded by the gum.

The visible part of the tooth, covered by enamel, the hardest material in the human body, is called the **crown**. Beneath the enamel is a bone - like material called dentine. The lower part which fits into the socket is called the **root**.

The soft centre of the tooth, called the pulp cavity, contains the blood supply and nerves. When a tooth decays and the pulp cavity is exposed, the patient feels toothache.



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