

## Letter to Parents of Young Children Concerning Infant Oral Health

**Did you know** that baby teeth are important for proper chewing, speech, and normal development of the jaws as well as for the child's general health?

**Did you know** that baby teeth play an important role in the development of a child's self-concept and self-esteem?

**Did you know** that baby teeth serve to guide the erupting permanent teeth into proper position?

**Did you know** that tooth decay is an infection which, if left untreated in a baby tooth, can cause significant damage, perhaps even exfoliation (loss), to the developing permanent tooth which lies in the jaw directly beneath the baby tooth?

As parents, one of our major goals and responsibilities is to assure that our children grow and develop properly and enjoy excellent health. We are fortunate to be living in a time when many once-critical diseases have been virtually eliminated. **Yet, dental decay (caries) remains the most widespread disease affecting young children.** This is most unfortunate considering the fact that dental disease is almost 100% preventable.

Toddlers and even infants less than 12 months old can suffer from tooth decay. Sadly, most parents receive important information on caries prevention at the time of their child's first dental visit -- which may be by the third birthday or later. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends a first dental examination no later than one year of age. We agree.

Prevention of dental disease in young children requires that preventive steps be implemented much earlier, beginning no later than twelve months of age. We have set aside special appointment times for infants 12 months or younger. In addition to the visual examination of your baby's mouth, the infant dental visit will allow us to share basic, important information regarding the prevention of dental disease. As a follow-up, we recommend that you immediately set up a separate appointment, at no charge, with our dental health educator. She will counsel you about correct oral hygiene techniques; dietary factors that contribute to dental decay; the causes of nursing bottle caries; use of fluoride; teething, and other dental concerns.

For more information about the infant dental exam, please call our office at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email your questions and concerns to us at [abc@dentalclinicname.com](mailto:abc@dentalclinicname.com). We look forward to helping you get your child started on the road to a lifetime of good oral health.

Sincerely,

Dr. Will Smith and Staff