

WHEN to see the DENTIST

WHAT the dentist will DO

Did you know that dentists have a chart that says when you and your family should be seen? The chart also tells the dentist what to look for at each dental visit. Here is a chart for you that is like the dentist's and tells you when to see the dentist and what the dentist will do each time you visit. This chart is based on the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Periodicity Schedule.

Everybody is different and every mouth is different. This chart only suggests when and why you should see the dentist. It is important that you talk with your dentist to figure out what is best for you and your family. The best plan is to find a dentist that you like and trust, see the dentist every 6 months and stay with that dentist so that they can watch you and your family's oral health as you all grow and change.

If you do not have a dentist, call this number for help finding one: 1-888-912-3456



Age: 6 months and 12 months

- **Regular oral examination. The dentist will look at how the mouth is growing and developing.** Take your child to the dentist when the first tooth comes in. You will learn how to take care of your baby's mouth. You are the key to helping your child have a healthy mouth and healthy oral habits.
- **Examination for cavities and the risk for cavities.** All teeth, including baby teeth can get cavities. See the dentist to find out how to prevent cavities.
- **X-rays (Radiographs).** The dentist will look in the mouth and decide when x-rays are needed. The dentist will only recommend x-rays when necessary.
- **Cleaning and polishing (prophylaxis) and fluoride.** The dentist will do an exam and decide how often to clean the teeth and how often to put fluoride on the teeth. Fluoride is a mineral that reduces cavities.
- **Information, education and advice about oral care, speech, growth and development, eating, mouth injury prevention, oral habits like thumb sucking and pacifiers.** Your dentist will talk to you about how to take care of your child's mouth as he/she grows. The dentist will also talk about preventing mouth injuries from pacifiers, car seats, learning to walk, and playing. The dentist will talk about thumb sucking and pacifiers and when to help your child stop those habits.



Age: 18 months and 24 months

- **Regular oral examination.** Keep visiting the dentist every 6 months for a check-up. You will continue to learn how to take care of your child's mouth.
- **Examination for cavities and the risk for cavities.** The dentist will continue to watch for cavities and changes in the mouth that may cause cavities.
- **X-rays (Radiographs).** The dentist will only recommend x-rays when necessary.
- **Cleaning and polishing (prophylaxis) and fluoride.** The dentist will do an exam and decide how often to clean the teeth and how often to put fluoride on the teeth. Fluoride is a mineral that reduces cavities.
- **Information, education and advice about oral care, speech, growth and development, eating, mouth injury prevention, and oral habits.** Your dentist will talk with you about how to take care of your child's mouth, healthy snacks and other healthy tips. Your dentist will talk with you about how your child is learning to talk to make sure the mouth is growing correctly. The dentist will also talk about preventing mouth injuries at this age.



Age: 2 years old and every 6 months up to 6 years old

- **Regular oral examination.** Keep visiting the dentist every 6 months. You and your child will continue to learn how to keep a healthy mouth. You will also learn how to teach your child how to take care of his/her own mouth.
- **Examination for cavities and the risk for cavities.** The dentist will continue to watch for cavities and changes in the mouth that may cause cavities.
- **X-rays (Radiographs).** The dentist will only recommend x-rays when necessary.
- **Cleaning and polishing (prophylaxis) and fluoride.** The dentist will do an exam and decide how often to clean the teeth and how often to put fluoride on the teeth.
- **Information, education and advice about oral care, speech, growth and development, eating, mouth injury prevention, and oral habits.** As your child grows, you will get advice about how to help your child learn to take care of his/her mouth, how to eat healthy, and other tips. Your dentist will give you information on how to prevent a mouth injury. If your child has a mouth injury the dentist will provide advice on how to deal with it.
- **Examination for malocclusion. This is the way the upper and lower teeth fit together for biting or chewing.** The dentist will look at the mouth and how the teeth fit together. This can affect eating, talking and smiling. The dentist will recommend how to fix any problems.
- **Sealants.** Dental sealants are a plastic resin that a dentist puts into the grooves of the chewing part of a tooth to help prevent cavities. The dentist may recommend sealants as the permanent back teeth come in.



Age: 6 years old and every 6 months until 12 years old

- **Regular oral examination.** Keep visiting the dentist every 6 months. You and your child will continue to learn how to keep a healthy mouth.
- **Examination for cavities and the risk for cavities.** The dentist will continue to watch for cavities and changes in the mouth that may cause cavities.
- **X-rays (Radiographs).** The dentist will only recommend x-rays when necessary.
- **Cleaning and polishing (prophylaxis) and fluoride.** The dentist will do an exam and decide how often to clean the teeth and how often to put fluoride on the teeth.
- **Information, education and advice about oral care, speech, growth and development, eating, mouth injury prevention, and oral habits.** Your dentist will talk with you and your child about how oral care is going. You will talk about your child's oral habits and what advice may be helpful for you and your child. This could include eating healthy, preventing oral injuries from playing and sports.
- **Examination for malocclusion. This is the way the upper and lower teeth fit together for biting or chewing.** The dentist will continue to look at the mouth and how the teeth fit together. The dentist may recommend how to fix any problems.
- **Sealants.** The dentist will recommend sealants as the permanent back teeth come in.



Age: 12 years, and every 6 months after that

- **Regular oral examination.** Keep visiting the dentist every 6 months.
- **Examination for cavities and the risk for cavities.** Teens are at high risk for cavities. The dentist will watch for any changes that may cause cavities.
- **X-rays (Radiographs).** The dentist will only recommend x-rays when necessary.
- **Cleaning and polishing (prophylaxis) and fluoride.** The dentist will do an exam and decide how often to clean the teeth and how often to put fluoride on the teeth. Fluoride is usually used up to age 16.
- **Information, education and advice about oral care, speech, growth and development, eating, mouth injury prevention, habits like smoking, piercing and drugs.** As children become teenagers, the dentist will talk about hormone changes and how that affects the mouth. The dentist may also talk about smoking, oral piercings and other things teens might do. This is to make sure the teen stays healthy and has good oral care.
- **Examination for malocclusion. This is the way the upper and lower teeth fit together for biting or chewing.** The dentist will look at the mouth and how the teeth fit together. The dentist will recommend how to fix any problems.
- **Sealants.** The dentist may recommend sealants as the permanent back teeth come in.
- **Examination and/or removal of wisdom teeth.** Wisdom teeth, also called third molars, can come in wrong. They can also cause the other teeth to be crowded. Because they are so far back it's hard to brush them well. The dentist will look at these teeth and recommend if they should be removed.
- **Adult dental care.** Your dentist will make recommendations for the kind of adult dental care that is needed for you and your family.