

Children's Dental

Building **lifelong healthy** habits

Regardless of your age, we believe that prevention is better than having to do dental treatments.

For children and parents a vital part of this is developing the best routines and habits for lifelong dental health 'self-care'.

For many of us, an aversion, dislike or even sheer hatred of the dentist developed through bad experiences at the dentist when we were younger. With the advent of many modern dental technologies, going to the dentist nowadays is not the same experience it was when we were children.

Why is it so important for kids to get to know the dentist?

In order to help your kids develop good dental habits and to build a positive association with the dentist, it is a good idea to bring your kids along with you on your regular visit, or when an older sibling visits us.

Your child can begin regular dental visits as early as 6 months of age when their first tooth appears, even if it is just to *'have a ride in the chair.'*

Essentially, the earlier and more often your child visits us, the less fearful they are likely to be.

When should kids start regular visits to the dentist?

In most cases we formally begin seeing children from about **3 years of age**, unless

any particular concerns arise. After their first visit, the child should see a dentist every 6 months for the rest of their life.

Baby teeth, *also known as milk teeth*, are important for the healthy development of the child. These teeth act as space holders for adult teeth in the development of the jaw so premature loss of the milk teeth may result in major problems.

If the bacteria that causes decay in children's milk teeth is left untreated, not only will it cause pain, but will also increase the likelihood of cavities in the adult teeth when they erupt.

The best way to look after your child's teeth

With anything it is best to start building good dental health from Day 1. As a baby with just a couple or no teeth, even a gentle rub of the gums with a warm wet cloth can remove bacteria and any trapped food.

With younger teeth there are specific brushes and toothbrushes you can buy, otherwise use warm water to soften the brush you use on them. Whilst it is great to give your child a turn at brushing their teeth, *mum or dad should always have a turn* after to ensure the teeth are clean.

This should be done right up until your child is 8-9 years old as many younger children lack the ability to clean their teeth properly.

Be sure to throw out that 'shaggy dog' toothbrush as well – it doesn't clean their teeth well at all!