

- Pain
- Gingivitis
- Bone structure damage (periodontal disease)
- General health problems

## Preventing Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

- *Begin oral care early. Schedule your child's first visit to the dentist around the age of two or three, unless there is a problem that requires an earlier visit.*
- *Begin brushing your child's teeth when the first tooth appears.*
- *Check your child's teeth for brown or discolored spots.*
- *Wipe your baby's gums with a clean gauze pad or washcloth after feeding, even before the first tooth appears.*
- *Never allow a baby or toddler to fall asleep with a bottle of milk or sweetened liquid. Substitute water if you feel a bottle is necessary.*
- *Never allow sleeping with a pacifier dipped in sugar or honey.*
- *Check your child's teeth on a regular basis.*
- *Alert your dentist of any changes or discoloration immediately.*
- *Teach your child to use a cup at about six months of age. By the age of one the bottle can be eliminated.*
- *Make sure your child receives a form of fluoride.*

## Your Dentist or Hygienist Can Help

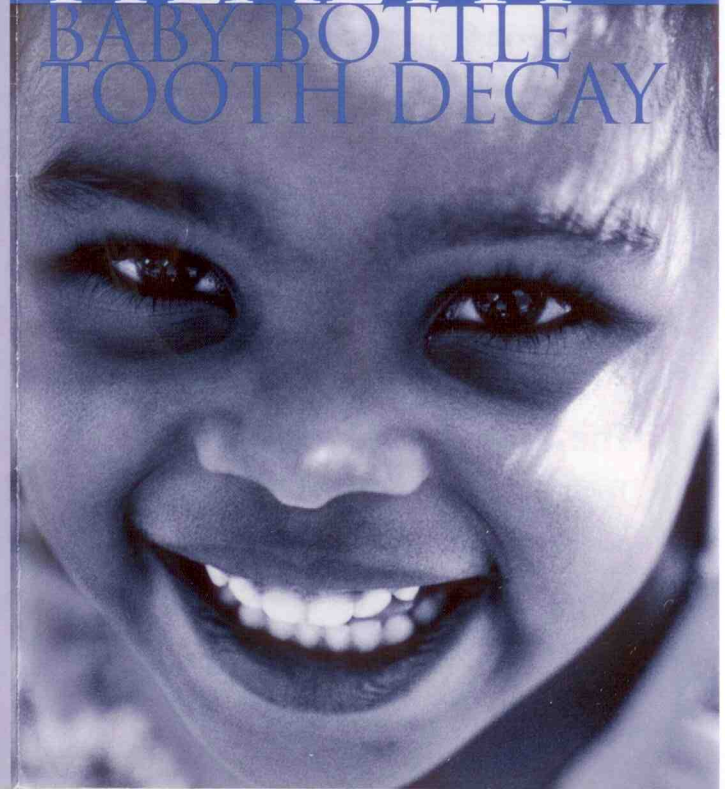
The first step is prevention. Start by talking to your dentist or hygienist and by following the guidelines outlined in this brochure. If your child has tooth damage from a bottle, your dentist or hygienist can help with treatment of the decay or infection and can develop a plan to prevent further damage.

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YOUR CHILD'S  
 DENTAL  
 HEALTH  
 BABY BOTTLE  
 TOOTH DECAY



# YOUR CHILD'S DENTAL HEALTH (BABY BOTTLE TOOTH DECAY)

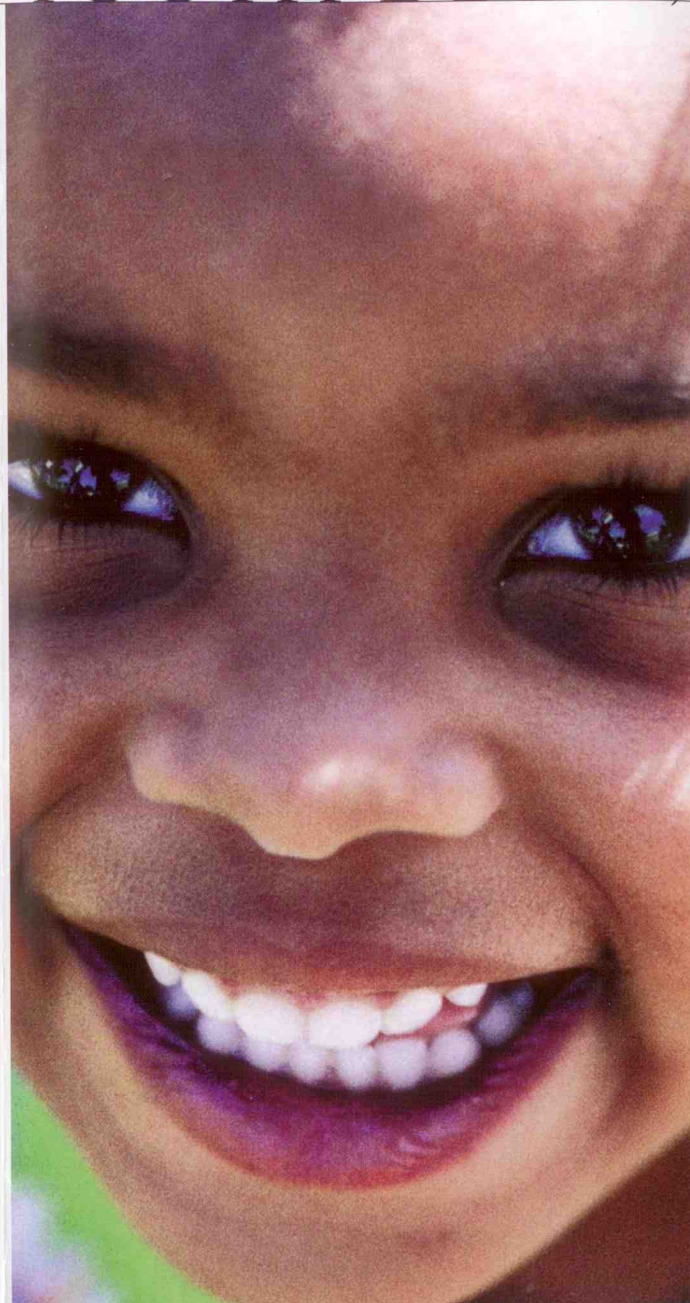
## About Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

This single condition may cause more pain and suffering in small children than all other conditions combined. It is a dental problem that can destroy the teeth of an infant or young child.

This type of tooth decay occurs when liquid (other than water) is exposed to a child's teeth for long periods of time. For example, when putting a baby to bed with a bottle, the teeth will have liquid on them overnight. Sugary liquids from the bottle will cause the teeth to decay. Examples of sugary liquids are milk, formula, soda pop, fruit juice and most other sweetened liquids.

## The Tooth Decay Process

Teeth are covered with a sticky film called plaque. The bacteria in plaque uses sugar to multiply and provide a constant supply of



acid to damaged teeth. During sleep, saliva decreases, allowing sugary liquids to pool around teeth for a longer period of time. The sugar stays in the mouth, allows acid to attack longer, and causes more damage and destruction to the teeth.

## Effects of Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Although, the upper front teeth usually are the first to be affected, all of the first set of teeth, commonly called "baby" or "primary" teeth, can be damaged. This can cause:

- *Permanent teeth development problems (crooked permanent teeth)*
- *Cavities*
- *Difficulty eating*
- *Delayed speech development*
- *Ear problems*
- *Staining brown spots*
- *Poor eating habits*
- *Social problems (self-esteem issues can be found in small children)*