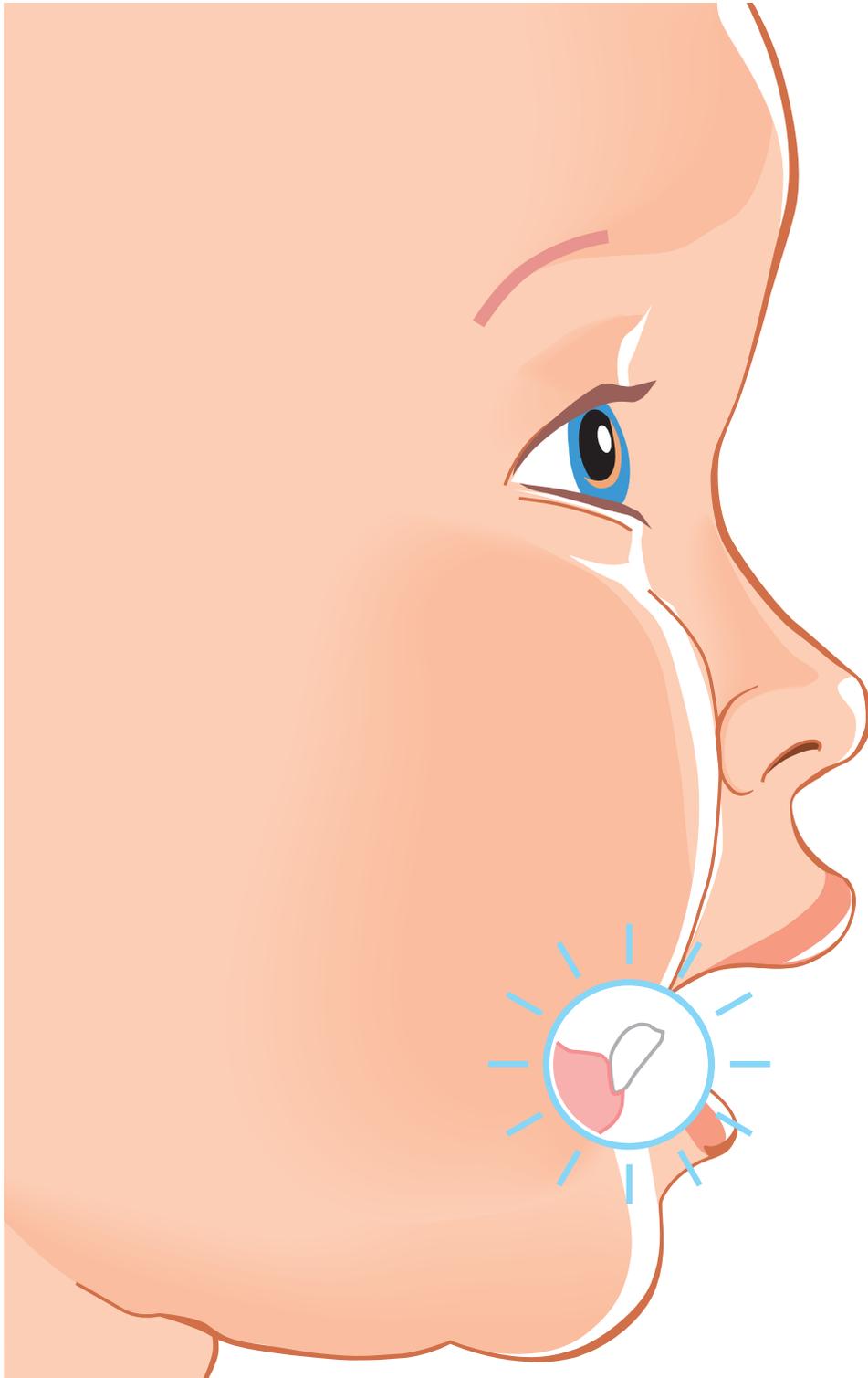


# Healthy Teeth

...a gift for the whole life.



compiled by V. Steinegger and H. Villiger, dental hygienists SRK

# Paving your child's way to a Happy and Healthy Mouth

## How do the teeth develop?

- In the fourth month of pregnancy mineralization of the tooth buds occur
- At birth, all of the primary teeth are formed and the cusps of the six-year molars are mineralized
- Every tooth erupts in a healthy state – free of decay

## Eruption chart of primary teeth: (There are always exceptions)



## Teething

With good oral hygiene and the regular massage of the gums with a soft cloth, one can help to minimize the problems of teething. If difficulties arise teething gels can help. Avoid all gels containing sugar, including lactose-containing homeopathic medications. Today an assortment of sugar substitutes are used in teething gels, for example Xylitol based gels. But beware – sugar substitutes in large quantities can cause diarrhea!

The deciduous or baby teeth form the child's mouth for about 3,5 to 8 years and have an important function as a space maintainer. For this reason the baby teeth should remain decay-free.

## **Dietary recommendations**

As in the permanent dentition, sugar is the enemy of primary teeth and should be avoided as much as possible.

### **Some suggestions:**

- Breast feed as long as possible and then switch to a drinking glass or container instead of a bottle
- Never put sugar or honey on the pacifier
- No snacks before bed and do not let the child sleep with a tea bottle or a milk bottle
- At night only have water in the bottle not milk. Don't give your child iced tea or watered down orange juice in a bottle or cup where the child can drink over long periods of time
- Sugar in combination with acid can cause serious tooth decay
- Avoid sweet snacks, the best snacks are sugar free – for example, fruit, vegetables, bread, milk, tea or water
- Desserts should be given after the main meal and not in between
- For older children sugarless sweets may be allowed

## **Oral hygiene**

Never lick the pacifier or spoon to „clean“ it. The bacteria can be transmitted to the child and in combination with sugar, can lead to a higher decay activity.

### **What is the proper fluoride dosage?**

- basic protection with fluoridated cooking salt (green and white package)
- until the child can rinse properly, tooth brushing without toothpaste or a pea-size amount of children's toothpaste (0,025% f.). After 2 years twice a day tooth brushing with children's toothpaste
- between the ages of 2 and 6 using a children's toothpaste with a 0.025% fluoride content
- from 6 to 12 yrs. of age junior toothpaste with a 0.1% – 0.15% fluoride content
- after 6 years using once a week gelée with a 1.25% fluoride content for the whole life. In addition use a fluoride rinse of 0.025% fluoride once a day.

### **How to care for the primary teeth**

- From the beginning gently clean the child's mouth with a soft towel
- Give the child a teething ring or a soft toothbrush to play with
- The child should be allowed to handle the toothbrush as soon as possible
- After every meal and sweet snack the child should brush his teeth

- Toothbrushing should be carried out patiently never forcing the child. Until the age of 8 years parents should help cleaning once a day
- Brush your own teeth together with your child – set an example
- The bathroom mirror should be at the child's eye level
- Establish cleaning techniques: first the chewing surfaces, then the outer surfaces. Begin cleaning the tongue side around the time the child enters kindergarten

**„Downstairs, upstairs, cheek side, tongue side“**

### **Thumb-sucking and pacifiers**

Pacifiers and finger-sucking and lip biting habits start off harmless but can lead to problems in the future. In the worst case they can lead to deformation of the dental arch, at the same time disturbing the functions of the tongue. The „open bite“ (front teeth which do not come together) is an example of such a malformation. This will influence the position of the permanent teeth when they erupt.

### **Suggestions**

- Only use the pacifier (soft and flat, not round) to help the child fall asleep or when the child is tired.
- After 3 and no later than 4 years of age, try to stop the child from using a pacifier, but make sure he doesn't substitute his thumb.
- Finger and thumb-sucking should also be stopped at this age. It is important to control it.
- Should you have problems consult your dental hygienist or your dentist.

### **When should the child make his first trip to the dentist?**

Between the ages of two and three. This way the child can get used to the surroundings and dental team. It is best to go before treatment is necessary.

The child might sit on the mother's or father's lap, so the parents can help the child show the dentist his teeth, again without forcing him. Yearly dental checkups are recommended thereafter.