

# Can babies get cavities?

Yes! If a baby's teeth are exposed to formula, juice, or even breast milk for extended periods of time, cavities can begin to form.

If your baby uses a pacifier, ensure it has not been dipped in any sweet liquids, or "cleaned" in a caregiver's mouth.

The risk of cavities is one reason why the [Canadian Dental Hygienists Association](#) recommends bringing your baby to the dental hygienist or dentist within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth, or before age 1.

*First visit by first year!*

## Teething

Anytime, from 6 months to 3 years old, your child might have tender gums, when teeth erupt.

Using a clean teething ring, a cold and wet washcloth, or simply rubbing baby's gums with a clean finger, can help.



## Pacifiers and Thumb Sucking

Sucking on a soother or a thumb is normal for babies. It helps them settle. Most children stop by age 2. Beyond this age, it should be discouraged as it can create crooked teeth or bite problems.

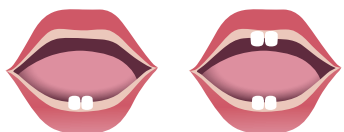
## Dental Coverage for Children

The government of Nova Scotia covers basic dental care for children up until the month they turn 15, who have an MSI card.

For more information, call the program administrator at 833.739.4035, or talk to your dental hygienist or dentist.

The Federal government has a *Canada Dental Benefits* program designed to help lower dental costs for eligible families earning less than \$90,000 per year. As a parent or guardian, you can apply for this benefit if your child is under 12 years old and the child doesn't have access to a private dental insurance plan. Go to <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/dental-benefit.html>

6 to 12 months



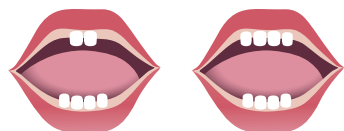
12 to 19 months



20 to 33 months



7 to 14 months



16 to 23 months



# Should a baby's mouth be cleaned?

Yes, daily! Even before the teeth erupt, clean your baby's mouth by wrapping a damp washcloth around a clean finger. Gently wipe the inside of baby's mouth and along the gums. If you see a white coating that will not wipe off, contact your health care provider.

When the first teeth come in, usually around 6 months, introduce a soft, small toothbrush with a smear (about the size of a grain of rice) of children's toothpaste.



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