

# ORAL HEALTH TIPS FOR CHILDREN AGED 3–6



## PREVENT CAVITIES

- Be careful not to transmit the bacteria that can cause cavities to your child:
  - Avoid kissing your child on the mouth. Aim for the cheeks and forehead!
  - Avoid sharing utensils or blowing on their food.
  - Avoid sharing toothbrushes.
- Parents, caregivers and siblings must keep their mouth clean and healthy by:
  - Brushing **twice a day**, for at least **2 minutes**, with fluoridated toothpaste.
  - Flossing on a daily basis.
  - Receiving dental treatment (as needed).
  - Going for regular preventive care check-ups with an oral health professional.

### DOES YOUR CHILD STILL SUCK THEIR **FINGERS** OR **THUMB**?

- Help them to stop as this can affect the alignment of your child's teeth and jaws.
- Your oral health professional can help you find strategies.



### It is **NOT** normal to lose baby teeth too early!

- By age 2 to 3, most children will have all 20 baby teeth.
- Baby teeth are very important for eating and speaking.
- They also help keep the space needed for the adult teeth.
- Children will start losing their baby teeth naturally between the ages of 5 and 8.

After your child's **permanent teeth begin to appear**, talk to your oral health professional about the application of **DENTAL SEALANTS** to protect the teeth.



## TAKE CARE OF YOUR CHILD'S MOUTH:

- Children learn by example—teach your little ones how to brush their teeth by having them watch you. Make it a part of your daily routine to do it together!
- If your child can't write their name, they will not be able to properly clean their teeth alone. It is hard for children to hold a toothbrush well enough to reach all areas of their mouth. You should help your child to brush their teeth.
- Brush your child's teeth, tongue and gums for **2 minutes, 2 times a day**, but most importantly, **before bedtime**.
- Teach your child to **spit out** the excess toothpaste and not swallow it.
- **Do not rinse** the mouth with water after brushing; this way the fluoride in the toothpaste will continue to protect the teeth.
- Once your child's teeth grow closer together and are touching, begin flossing everyday. Do it until they develop the ability to floss on their own (usually around 9 years old).



Use only a **SMALL AMOUNT** (a small green pea-sized or 5mm maximum) of fluoridated toothpaste.

## LIFT THE LIP

Routinely **lift your child's lip** to check for anything on the teeth or in the mouth. If you see white chalky or brown spots on the teeth, consult your oral health professional or your public health office. To learn more about the **“Lift the lip” technique**, go to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=05QLGBWJFwE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05QLGBWJFwE)



For more information, visit: [www.canada.ca/health](http://www.canada.ca/health) and search for *‘How to Clean Your Baby’s Mouth’*  
Also visit [www.cda-adc.ca](http://www.cda-adc.ca) and search for *‘Cleaning Teeth’*

