



EARLY CHILDHOOD TOOTH DECAY*

*Early Childhood Tooth Decay (ECTD) can also be referred to as Early childhood caries (ECC)

Early childhood tooth decay (ECTD) are cavities found in children 6 years old and younger, often affecting the upper front teeth.

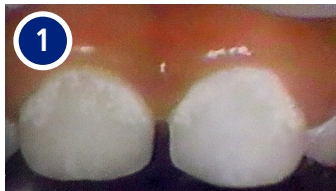
HOW DO CAVITIES DEVELOP?

- **Bacteria** begin to live in the mouth at birth.
- Parents and caregivers affect the type of bacteria that live in their children's mouth. This can be due to sharing utensils or soothers.
- **Frequent or ongoing exposure to sugar** (i.e., in milk, juice, etc.) increases the risk of cavities.
- **Sugar combined with bacteria in the mouth produces an acid.** That acid can damage the tooth's hard outer layer (enamel) leading to cavities.

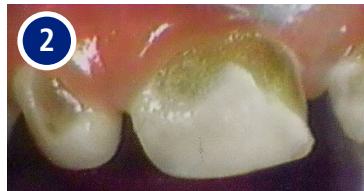
Even though your child's baby teeth are temporary, it is still important to take care of them. Building healthy habits in baby teeth leads to a healthy adult smile!

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD HAS ECTD?

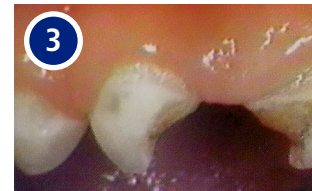
If you see white or brown spots on your baby's teeth, take your child to the dentist.



1
Chalky, white area around the gum line of the top front teeth.



2
Quickly turns into brown decay.



3
If left alone, teeth begin to breakdown, which can lead to infection.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT ECTD?

- Lift your baby's top lip to check for cavities at least once a month.
- Wipe your baby's gums with a clean washcloth in the morning, at night and after feeding.
- If your baby falls asleep while feeding, gently remove the nipple before placing your baby to sleep.
- If your baby sleeps with a bottle, only use water.
- As soon as your baby's teeth appear, brush them at least twice a day with a small, soft toothbrush with only tap water (no toothpaste).
- Avoid sharing utensils with your baby or putting their soother in your mouth.
- Visit a dentist with your baby by age one, or within 6 months of their first tooth erupting.

