

4 Stages of Childhood Smiles

Whether you've got a toddler or an elementary schooler, help your child have healthy teeth for a lifetime.

- 1 PRENATAL CARE:** Your baby's teeth begin developing during the fifth week of pregnancy, so nourish them by making the right choices.
 - > **Eat well.** Make sure your diet is balanced.
 - > **Opt for essentials.** Get enough calcium, phosphorous and vitamins A and D.
- 2 INFANT ORAL CARE:** You should start cleaning your baby's gums even before his or her first teeth emerge. Here's how to start on the right track:
 - > **Wipe your baby's gums.** Use a soft, damp washcloth or gauze pad.
 - > **Use only water in bedtime bottles.** Added and natural sugars in juices, formula and milk can cause decay.
 - > **Visit the dentist.** Take your child to the dentist by his or her first birthday and every six months thereafter.
- 3 LITTLE TEETH:** All baby teeth should grow in by around age 2 and a half.
 - > **Brush together.** Help children brush their own teeth twice a day.
 - > **Start flossing** your child's teeth as soon as there are two adjacent teeth.
 - > **Add toothpaste.** Use a small, soft-bristled toothbrush with a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
 - > **Visit the dentist** for regular cleanings and exams.
- 4 BIG CHOMPERS:** By age 6, your child's baby teeth may start to fall out. Baby teeth should all be replaced by around age 12.
 - > **Teach technique.** Children should be able to brush and floss alone, with adults occasionally checking for a job well done.
 - > **Continue to visit the dentist regularly.** For added protection, your dentist may recommend fluoride treatments or sealants.

Your child's first dental visit should happen before his or her first birthday

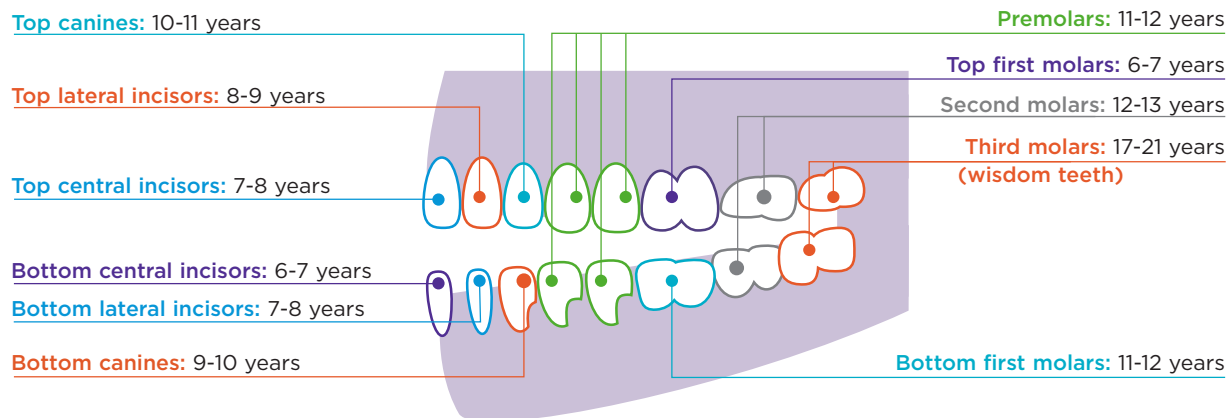
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 DELTA DENTAL®

WE KEEP YOU SMILING™



When do grown-up teeth grow in?¹



SEE THE DENTIST: Here are ways to make it a happy experience:

- > **Mix in some fun.** Combine dental visits with trips to the park, movies or a favorite lunch spot.
- > **Think positive.** Avoid using negative words like “hurt” or “shot.”
- > **Lead by example.** Bring your child along to your or siblings’ dental checkups so that your child knows what to expect.

FLUORIDE IS KEY: This mineral is an essential component for building strong enamel and stopping decay. Make sure your child’s teeth get enough fluoride from these sources:

- > Fluoride toothpaste
- > Topical fluoride treatments (applied by your child’s dentist)
- > Fluoridated tap water (or supplements)

SEEK OUT SEALANTS: Sealants help protect cavity-prone teeth from decay. These plastic coatings seal off the deep crevices in teeth so they don’t trap food and bacteria. Sealants are the most effective when applied on permanent teeth as soon as they grow in.

MAKE HEALTHY SMILES FUN

Grin! for Kids is a free kid-friendly resource from Delta Dental. With wacky tooth trivia, jokes and craft projects you can do together, this printable magazine offers a lively approach to learning about oral health for children K-5.

Visit ddins.grinmag.com to download the latest issue.

¹ “Tooth eruption: The permanent teeth.” American Dental Association. http://www.ada.org/-/media/ADA/Publications/Files/patient_58.ashx

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