

Treating Young Kids Every Day

6-Step Infant Oral Care Visit

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1. Interview

Elements of the interview

- Greet child and caregiver
- Start building rapport with the child
- Overview and expectations of the visit
- Caries Risk Assessment questions



2. Position the child

Assume the knee-to-knee position with the child sitting in the caregiver's lap and lowering the child's head onto your lap.

3. Oral Examination and Caries Risk Assessment

How much time you have to complete this step is dependent on the child's age and ability to cooperate. It may be helpful to give the child a toothbrush or toy as a distraction. You may also be able to use a toothbrush handle as a mouth prop while you "count" the child's teeth aloud.

Whether you have seconds or minutes, this is the step where you assess the child's oral condition, looking for chalky white spots, obvious tooth decay, tooth defects or other abnormalities. Based on your interview with the caregiver and your clinical assessment, decide if the child is at low, moderate or high risk for tooth decay.



4. Toothbrush Prophylaxis

Brush the child's teeth, showing the caregiver how to do the same at home. This is a good time to remind the family about the importance of using fluoride toothpaste daily, starting with just a small smear for children under the age of 3.

5. Fluoride Varnish Treatment

Provide a fluoride varnish treatment if the child is at high risk for tooth decay.

6. Summary and Goal Setting

Raise the child back up into the caregiver's lap and discuss your findings and recommendations for follow-up, treatment and referral. Using motivational interviewing, help the family set 1-2 short-term goals for home care.