



Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas is offering a free "Parenting Tip of the Month" monthly email. If you are not interested in continuing to receive this monthly resource, just click on the "[SafeUnsubscribe](#)" option at the bottom of this email.

February Parenting Tip of the Month...

Dental Health Tips



The month of February may be widely recognized for Valentine's Day, but it is also known as National Children's Dental Health Month. According to the American Dental Association, baby teeth are very important to your child's overall health and development. They help your child to chew, talk and smile. Baby teeth also hold space in your child's jaws for the permanent teeth that are under the gums.

Establishing good oral health care begins during your child's first year. Babies can develop tooth decay when there is frequent and prolonged exposure to drinks that contain sugar. You can prevent this by cleaning your baby's gums with a clean, damp washcloth after feedings and not putting your child to sleep with a bottle.

Your child's first tooth will appear between 6 and 12 months. Most children will have all 20 primary teeth by their 3rd birthday. When the first tooth appears, begin brushing your baby's tooth with a child-sized brush and a "smear" of fluoride-containing toothpaste no larger than the size of a grain of rice. It is also recommended to schedule a dental appointment by your child's 1st birthday to have their teeth and gums checked. For help finding a dentist near you, visit the American Dental Association's "Find-a-Dentist®" tool at <https://findadentist.ada.org/>

Continue to brush your child's teeth in the morning and evening with a smear of fluoride-containing toothpaste until the age of 3. Between the ages of 3 and 6, children should brush with a pea-sized portion twice a day. It is also recommended that adults assist and supervise children's brushing and flossing, and remind them not to swallow the toothpaste until around 8 years of age.

Not all children look forward to having their teeth brushed. Here are a few tips to help make brushing time more enjoyable.

- Develop a morning and evening tooth-brushing routine.
- Plan to read a story or do an activity your child enjoys after brushing teeth.
- Give your child a choice, like which tooth brush to use.
- Teach a stuffed animal how to brush its teeth.
- Brush your teeth with your child.
- Read books on brushing teeth or visiting the dentist.
- Add a song to your brushing. For example, sing the below verses to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

*Brush, brush, brush your teeth.
Brush them round and round.
Cleaner, whiter, stronger teeth.
You don't have to frown.(Repeat)*



For more tooth-brushing tunes, games and activities, [click here](#) to visit the ADA's Mouth Healthy Kids webpage. If you would like recipes of "Tooth-Friendly" snacks for children, [click here](#).

Developing good oral health care with your child will encourage good habits into adulthood and keep their smile beautiful.

Sources:

- American Dental Association's Mouth Healthy, <http://www.ada.org/en/Home-MouthHealthy/babies-and-kids/>

- South Dakota Department of Health's Tooth Brushing Songs, <https://doh.sd.gov/prevention/assets/ToothbrushingSongs.pdf>

Looking for child care or parent resources?

*Don't forget to contact our Parent Resource Center at 785-357-5171,
877-678-2548 toll free, and select option 1!*



To contact Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas,
call 785-357-5171 or 877-678-2548 toll free.
Visit our website at east.ks.childcareaware.org.

