



What Is Bottle Syndrome?

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Understanding bottle syndrome

Bottle syndrome, also called baby bottle tooth decay, is a serious condition that can destroy your child's teeth. It occurs when teeth are exposed, frequently and at length, to liquids that contain sugar. The liquid pools around the teeth and gums, providing food for the bacteria in plaque. The bacteria produce acid as a byproduct when they consume the sugar. This acid attacks your child's teeth and causes decay.

Your child's teeth are vulnerable to decay from the moment they break through the gums. You may not even notice the decay until it's too late to save the teeth, so it's crucial that you prevent bottle syndrome from occurring in the first place.



Severe damage

Why is bottle syndrome such a serious condition?

Bottle syndrome can lead to toothaches, which are painful and make it difficult for your child to eat. Left untreated, the decay caused by bottle syndrome can cause infection, which may result in us having to remove teeth. If baby teeth are lost too early, your child could suffer from poor nutrition, speech problems, crooked teeth, and permanent damage to adult teeth.



At bedtime, use water only

Which liquids cause bottle syndrome?

All liquids that contain sugar can cause bottle syndrome. This includes breast and cow's milk (which contain the sugar lactose), formula, fruit juice (which contains the sugar fructose), as well as soda and other sweetened drinks.

How can you prevent bottle syndrome?

- Begin cleaning your child's teeth, as soon as they erupt, by wiping teeth and gums with a clean, damp washcloth or a very soft infant toothbrush after each feeding.
- If your child takes a bottle to bed, or needs the comfort of a bottle for long periods during the day, put only water in the bottle, or switch to a pacifier.
- Begin flossing your child's teeth daily when all primary teeth have come in, usually around age two or two and a half.
- Bring your child in to see us every six months, beginning when the first tooth erupts.
- Find out if your local water supply contains fluoride. If it doesn't, we can give you a prescription for fluoride supplements.



Clean teeth after each feeding

Promoting good oral hygiene when your child is young can prevent bottle syndrome and promote good dental habits that will last a lifetime!