

Is this child at risk for decay?

Ask these questions to see if a child is at risk for tooth decay.

- Has this child ever had tooth decay or fillings?
- Has this child's mother or caregiver had tooth decay or fillings in the past year?
- Does this child's mother know she can pass germs that may cause tooth decay to her baby through saliva?
- Does this child go to bed with a bottle filled with milk, formula, or juice?
- Does this child use a pacifier with sugar or honey?
- Does this child snack on sweet and starchy food or have sweetened drinks between meals?



If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, the child may be at risk for tooth decay. Refer the baby or child to a dental provider or physician.

What we know:

- Tooth decay is the number one chronic disease among children.
- Tooth decay is largely preventable by taking simple measures at home.
- Children are born without the germs that cause tooth decay.
- Germs that cause tooth decay can be passed from a mother or caregiver to a child early in life through saliva.
- Tooth decay can start early (between ages one and two).
- Baby teeth are important. They allow children to chew food for good nutrition and to speak properly.
- Baby teeth hold space in the jaw for the permanent teeth.
- A toothache can affect a child's ability to learn.

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