

first dental visit

When should a child see a dentist?

We recommend that a child be seen by a dentist by the age of 1 or within 6 months after his or her first tooth comes erupts.

Why does a child need to see a dentist at such a young age?

It allows the dentist to educate parents about basic oral health care and also assess the dental development of their child.

It is also crucial to identify & to correct some habits that might have long term detrimental effects on oral health early. This includes tongue tie, thumb sucking and poor weaning habits.

It is not advisable to wait until there is a problem before visiting the dentist. A child in pain is more likely to be anxious, resist treatment & develop dental phobia. Introduce dentistry before any dental problem arise, so that the first visit can be a friendly and non invasive one.

What happens at the first dental visit?

The first dental visit is usually very short and your child might not receive any actual treatment.

It is a visit to **introduce the child to the dental environment** (eg. chair, light, sound, etc). It should be in a relaxed and friendly manner.

Before the examination, the dentist will take a good history.

Depending on the age of the child, the parents might be asked to sit on the dental chair and hold the child. An older child can

usually sit on the dental chair alone.



During the entire examination, the dentist will check the child's teeth for the number of teeth erupted, the bite of the child, presence of decay or early signs of decay, and any other soft tissue pathology.

The correct brushing technique will also be demonstrated to the parents.

After examination, the dentist will discuss any dental issues, if any and also give the parents some advice on how to improve the oral health of the child. Appointments for follow-up or treatment will be scheduled if necessary. A six monthly check up is usually necessary for the child to be familiar with the clinic and the dentist. If the child has special needs or is very apprehensive, appointments are usually more frequent for acclimatization.

Preparation for the 1st Visit

Parents can read a book about visiting the dentist and explain that the child needs to open his/her mouth for the dentist to check/count his/her teeth. However, it is advisable not to over-emphasize the dental visit, `make a big deal out of it', or worse threaten the child to behave well as this can increase the child's anxiety.



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