

5 Tips for Taking Your Child to His/Her First Dental Appointment

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Did you know that poor dental care could affect your child's *speech development, nutrition* and even *self-image*? Although the American Dental Association recommends your child's first dental appointment coincide with his/her first tooth, research shows that only 10 percent of 1-year-olds and 23 percent of 2-year-olds attended a preventive dental visit in the past year. Making bi-annual dental check-ups a part of your child's regular health routine is necessary for the right start to healthy oral care. Following these 5 tips can ensure a smooth initial visit and help pave the way for easy future check-ups:

1. Try to schedule a morning appointment if possible. Children are more awake, alert, and rested in the morning. Introducing a new situation to a spent child is a recipe for failure. Many pediatricians agree that young children are at their best around 8:00 AM.
2. Use positive words to describe the dentist. Whether your own predisposition is positive or negative, it's important not to speak poorly or use unconstructive terminology about visiting the dentist. Communicate statements like, "the dentist is a friendly doctor who helps us." This will make certain your child understands the dentist is a trusted grown-up in whose care he can feel secure.
3. Make sure your dentist has experience with children and can treat your child in a firm, yet gentle manner. During the examination, a child-friendly dentist can employ different techniques to help your child feel more at ease: sharing the examining chair with a parent; using child friendly jargon for dental instruments like, "teeth tickler" or easy to understand instructions such as, "kiss the straw".
4. Brush your child's teeth 2-3 times per day to get used to having his/her teeth cleaned. The child accustomed to teeth brushing (with the assistance of Mom or Dad) will feel more comfortable and accommodating during the examination process. Consider various ways to make teeth brushing fun for your child like insisting he/she brush through the first stanza of his/her favorite song.
5. Go to the dentist early--The American Dental Association recommends your child's first visit by age 1. Your child should generally see a dentist when he gets his first tooth, or by age one at the latest -- "First visit by first birthday" is a good rule of thumb, according to both the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

A successful first dental appointment can be a positive and empowering experience for both you and your child that can lead to a lifetime of excellent oral hygiene and healthy smiles.

About Us

Located in San Jose, California, Pries Dental Care specializes in creating smiles that last a lifetime. Through the use of modern and innovative dental procedures, techniques and customer focus, Dr. Pries and his staff are dedicated to providing the highest quality of dental care available today. Pries Dental Care's "Bundle of Smiles" preventive dental care plan provides individuals with an alternative to paying high dental insurance premiums. Contact Pries Dental Care directly at 408. 260.0200 or visit our website at www.priesdental.com and find out how you can get your "Perfect Smile Kit."

