Whenever your baby has food or drink containing sugar the bacteria in the mouth produce acid which attacks and dissolves the enamel of the tooth surface.

There are various types of sugar - fructose, sucrose, dextrose and glucose syrup - all are harmful to teeth.

To prevent tooth decay it is important for your baby not to take sugary foods and acidic drinks too frequently throughout the day.

Choose baby’s snacks carefully to ensure strong healthy teeth, for example fresh fruit and vegetables or cheese.

Milk and water are the only safe drinks to have at anytime.

Well diluted fruit drinks should only be given at mealtimes.

Remember to keep drinking times short and don’t let baby sip at a drink throughout the day.

Start brushing your baby’s teeth as soon as they come through - it becomes a habit.

Use a toothbrush with a small head and a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.

Brush after breakfast and most important last thing at night with nothing to eat or drink during the night except water.

Clean all tooth surfaces and make sure all areas of the mouth are brushed - don’t leave out the difficult parts.

Help with toothbrushing at least until your child starts school - children are unable to clean their teeth properly until they can write properly.

Even when your child takes over look into the mouth to see that it’s done properly.
Dental treatment is free for all children up to 18 years of age.

Register your baby with a dentist at an early age.

If you have difficulty registering contact the Dental Helpline (Tel. No. 0800 371192)

Regular visits are important for children. They will get to know the dentist and get used to going.

The dentist can explain how best to brush the teeth and can tell you about fluoride drops and tablets which help to strengthen children's teeth against decay.

- Your Health Visitor or health clinic can tell you how to get advice on dental care.
- Sweets, chocolate and soft drinks should be kept as special treats and not part of your child's daily diet.
- Grandparents often like to give treats to their grandchildren. Small gifts such as books and toys are better than sweets and they last longer.

Parents
- You control the diet and toothbrushing
- You control the disease

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