

## **NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

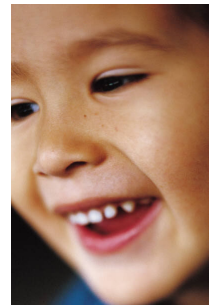
**February 2007**

# Parenting *Rules!*

### **Healthy Teeth Mean Healthy Kids**

---

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. Of course, you want to keep your child's smile looking healthy and beautiful. But did you know that a healthy mouth means better health overall? Here are some reasons why you need to take good care of your child's teeth and gums.

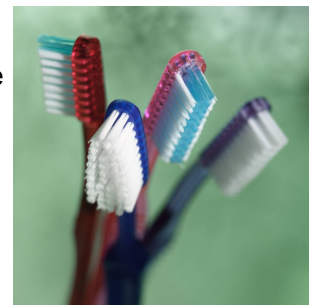


- Cavities, or tooth decay, can be painful.
- Dental problems can cause infection in the mouth or trouble in other parts of the body.
- Dental problems can cause eating problems, which can lead to poor nutrition.
- Children with dental problems often feel embarrassed about how their mouths look.

### **Good Brushing & Good Habits**

---

- Have your child brush at least twice a day. For younger kids, let them brush first to get practice, then brush their teeth yourself to be sure they're clean.
- Use a toothbrush with soft bristles that's the right size for your child's mouth. Buy a new one every few months or when it starts to look worn out.
- Talk to your pediatrician about when your child should start using toothpaste with fluoride. (The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends age 2 or later.) Use a small amount (the size of a pea), and teach your child to spit out toothpaste and not swallow it.
- If your drinking water doesn't have fluoride, talk to your pediatrician or dentist to see if your child needs fluoride drops. If you don't know if your drinking water has fluoride, talk to your pediatrician or dentist.
- Sugar causes tooth damage. Don't give your child too many foods that have a lot of sugar, such as candy and juices.



**NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH**  
**February 2007**

# Parenting *Rules!*

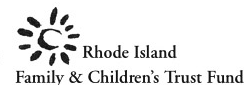
## **Taking Care of Baby's Teeth & Gums**

- Have your pediatrician check your baby's teeth and gums at check-ups.
- To clean your baby's gums before she starts getting teeth, wipe her gums with a clean, damp washcloth.
- If your baby is teething (this is when his teeth are cutting through his gums), he might drool, become cranky, or wake up crying in the middle of the night. His gums hurt. Try letting him chew on a teething ring, or ask your pediatrician about giving him Tylenol (acetaminophen) to make him more comfortable.
- Don't put your baby to sleep with a bottle. The sugar in formula, juice and milk will stay on your child's teeth overnight and can cause cavities.
- Your child should start seeing a dentist at around age 1 to make sure her teeth are growing well.



## **About Parenting Rules! E-News**

Parenting Rules! e-news is produced by Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island and is partially supported by an annual grant from the Rhode Island Family & Children's Trust Fund.



Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island  
500 Prospect Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860  
phone: 401.728.7920 fax: 401.724.5850  
email: [info@preventchildabuse-ri.org](mailto:info@preventchildabuse-ri.org)  
web: <http://www.preventchildabuse-ri.org>

Some of these tips were adapted from materials produced by Delta Dental and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Please share these tips with families in your programs. Thank you!