

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay (Early Childhood Caries)



Overview

We don't always think about tooth decay being a problem for babies and toddlers. But it's a common issue, and it's serious. Many babies are given bottles with sweet liquids throughout the day and night. This can weaken teeth and allow cavities to form. We call this "baby bottle tooth decay."

Causes

Juice, formula and milk have sugars in them. With each sip from a bottle, this sugar washes over your child's teeth. It triggers the plaque on your child's teeth to release harmful acids. These acids damage teeth. This can happen over and over again throughout the day. It's especially bad to give your child a bottle just before bedtime. That's because the sweet liquid stays on your child's teeth for several hours while they sleep.

Symptoms

This type of decay often affects the teeth in the front of the mouth. Several teeth may be affected. They may begin to look brown or black. Over time, they decay. Your child may develop cavities in many teeth all at once.

Treatment

You can prevent baby bottle tooth decay by limiting sweet drinks and foods, and by learning the right way to brush your child's teeth. If your child's teeth have begun to decay, a dentist can help keep it from getting worse. Even though baby teeth aren't permanent, taking good care of them can help your child avoid dental problems in the future. Talk to your dentist or doctor for more information.

