

Here's a surprising fact:

Children should visit  
the dentist by age 1.

In fact, before the first baby teeth even erupt, parents can take measures to help protect their little ones from the effects of dental disease.

## Protecting Your Baby's Smile

- Clean your baby's gums with a damp washcloth after feedings. Cleaning your baby's gums will help keep bacteria levels low and maintain a clean home for his or her new teeth.
- Once that first tooth erupts, use a soft toothbrush and water to brush your baby's teeth and gums in soft, gentle circles twice a day, and check for any spots or stains.
- Within six months of getting the first tooth – and no later than the first birthday – your baby should have his or her first dental visit.

## Your Baby's First Dentist Visit

During the first visit, the dentist will examine your child's teeth for early signs of decay, but will also look for problems with the baby's head, neck, jaws, skin and soft tissues in and around the mouth. In addition, the dentist will:

- Assess your child's risk for early dental decay.
- Demonstrate various tooth brushing and flossing techniques and positions to help parents care for their baby's teeth properly.
- Discuss diet and feeding/snacking practices that put your child at risk for decay.
- Discuss the use of topical fluoride.
- Assess your child's bite, facial growth and development.
- Provide information for trauma prevention as your child goes through stages of development.

For more tips on preparing for a lifetime of smiles, visit [DentistBy1.com/Missouri](https://DentistBy1.com/Missouri).

**dentist by 1™**

Cavities are nearly 100% preventable.

**Delta Dental of Missouri**