

Preventing infant tooth decay!



What is infant tooth decay?

Infant tooth decay can occur soon after the baby teeth erupt, usually between nine months and two years. It is severe decay often caused by frequent drinks of sugary liquids. The risk of developing infant tooth decay is greatly increased when children use bottles containing sweetened drinks. Infant tooth decay is less common in breastfed babies.

Preventing infant tooth decay

Breastfeeding is best for your baby. If you are bottle feeding, give your baby the bottle only at feed times or when he or she is hungry. Take the bottle away as soon as the baby has had enough. Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle containing anything other than water. Also, do not let your child walk around with a bottle.

Never put cordial, soft drink or juice in your baby's bottle.

Try using alternative comfort at bedtime like a teddy or a blanket, singing a lullaby or telling a bedtime story.



Try introducing the use of a cup from about six months of age.

Try to stop bottle use from about twelve months of age.



If using a dummy, do not add flavouring.

Remember, water is best when your baby is only thirsty.



If your child has difficulty sleeping, contact a local child health nurse or your doctor for assistance.

Remember, infant tooth decay is preventable. If you think your child has infant tooth decay, or you would like additional information about preventing it, contact a dental professional.



Queensland
Government
Queensland **Health**

Queensland Health, reprinted 2008. Adapted from *Preventing Nursing Bottle Decay in Your Child*.
Health Department of Western Australia. November 1992.