

ORAL HEALTH CARE WHILE BREAST AND BOTTLE FEEDING

- Human breast milk is a great nutrient source to help infants grow and develop.
- Current research recommends that, if possible, infants be fed only breast milk from 0-6 months.
- Infants fed **only** human breast milk have a low risk of developing cavities.
- Breastfeeding a child to sleep should be avoided, as this may increase the risk of developing dental caries.
- Caregivers should use a soft toothbrush for teeth and a damp cloth to wipe the inside of the infant's mouth after feeding.



- Once the first baby tooth appears, mothers should avoid at will nighttime breastfeeding or clean the mouth and teeth after feeds to prevent pooling of liquid around the teeth, which can lead to cavities. This is especially important if foods or liquids other than breast milk have been introduced into the diet.



- Any bottle or non-spill cup taken to bed or sipped on through the day should contain only water. If the bottle or non-spill cup contains milk, formula, juice or anything but water, there is a great risk of cavities if the mouth and teeth are not cleaned between 'sips'.

References

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Additional Resources

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Parent Health Education Resource Working Group. Loving Care: 6 to 12 Months. [Halifax]: Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, 2012.

Parent Health Education Resource Working Group. Loving Care: 1 to 3 Years. [Halifax]: Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, 2012.

Parent Health Education Resource Working Group. Loving Care: Parents and Families. [Halifax]: Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, 2012.