

# Why One Might Consider Having a Baby Should See a Pediatric Dentist Before One Year

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When one has got a little one in their home, that first year of their life is full of exciting new moments and milestones; first smiles, sitting up, crawling, first full night of sleep, walking, first words, and among others, the first tooth! As a local pediatric dentists, we are committed to the happy and healthy smiles of all children and proper dental care for those first teeth is, therefore, a topic near and dear to our hearts.

Accordingly, today's article topic is about why a one-year-old should visit a pediatric dentist.

While the eruption of the first baby tooth varies quite widely, anywhere from three months of age to 12 months old, experts agree (the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), and the American Dental Association for starters) that a child's first dental office visit should occur before or at the age of one year old. Some might feel that one or two sweet little baby teeth shouldn't require a dental visit, and while we can understand why might believe that, there are two powerful reasons why. Let's dive into those reasons.

## 2 Crucial Reasons Why a One Year Old Needs to Go to the Pediatric Dentist

Lay the Foundation – Lamentably, many adults and children have a fear of the dentist. Often



## Pediatric Dentistry

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adults who have had a negative experience with a dentist can unknowingly pass on general feelings of distrust, suspicion, and fear to their children. Like the field of medicine, dentistry is not a stagnant industry. Our knowledge and understanding have grown exponentially alongside the development of better technologies and techniques to make the experience more comfortable and virtually pain-free. In addition to improvements in knowledge and practice, major emphasis has been placed in the field of pediatric dentistry on how to create, develop, and foster positive associations and relationships for children with dentistry. We begin by laying the foundation, early in life. A trip to the dentist becomes a normal part of life, much like the way going to the pediatrician as a child is.

Prevention – In addition to laying the foundation, a dentist visit by one year of age allows the first dentist trip to not have an association with pain. Consider, if one waits to go to the dentist for the first time until their child is having pain in a tooth, then that place becomes associated with pain. Moreover, while at six to 12 months of age a little one might not have many teeth, we can discuss and review proper ways of feeding, brushing, massaging gums, and other important hygiene practices that work to prevent cavities. Even if their child only has one or two teeth, it is still possible to get cavities, and bottle rot is, unfortunately, more common than we'd likely and almost entirely due to lack of information for parents.

### How to Prepare for the First Trip to the Pediatric Dentist

Be sure the time is right! Each child is unique and has their own rhythms that their bodies and minds cycle throughout the day. Watch closely for a few days (or ask a childcare provider) to look for the time of day when their child is most alert and merry. This time of day for the child will vary however typically occurs sometime before midday.

Let them eat their meal or snack before the appointment. Hungry littles are less tolerant (understandably so) and more likely to cry and refuse any requests.

We recommend talking with a little one about the impending trip to the dentist. Regardless of how verbal the child is at this age, telling them about a new activity incorporated into their day is helpful, as they understand more than we think! One might be cautious not to impart any words of anxiety or negativity about the visit. For this age, a simple “we’re going to the dentist today, and they’re going to look at their tooth and show us how to clean it properly” is enough.

Bring the favored snuggle animal. A comfort item is absolutely appropriate for their toddler to bring to the dentist. Our offices are specifically designed to be warm and welcoming for children, yet a cuddly stuffed animal or doll is invited along. Furthermore, we can even incorporate said cuddly stuffed animal into a demonstration.

We recommend adults come with their children. If possible, leave their siblings with another family member, school, or childcare setting. Allow oneself to focus entirely on their child during the dental visit attentive to their cues without distractions from another sibling.

## [What to Expect for the First Trip to the Pediatric Dentist](#)

One might be wondering what exactly a dentist visit entails when only one or two teeth (or less or more) have erupted. Here's what one might expect that first time:

We'll let them and their child have a look around the office, and let them choose if they want to sit alone in the dentist's chair or on the parents' lap. If appropriate, we may use their accompanying snuggle animal to give a demonstration of what we'll do. We'll take a look inside their mouth, assessing their gums and teeth for any injuries, cavities, or plaque. Following that inspection, we'll clean the teeth. Before they leave, we'll review dental hygiene routine at home and offer advice or information for any questions one might have.

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