

DENTAL QUESTION



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QUESTION

When should a child see a dentist?

ANSWER

This question is often asked by new parents and the answer may be surprising for some. Both the Ontario Dental Association and the Academy of General Dentistry recommend bringing your child in to see the dentist approximately 6 months after the first tooth appears which is generally around the first birthday. This may seem very early but the reasoning for this is for the child to build trust and comfort with the dentist. Seeing the dentist for the first time can be a very stressful situation for the child because of all the new faces, hearing the various instruments, and the general unknown of the new environment. By exposing your child to the dental office earlier in his/her life for very simple check-ups can help to alleviate anxieties later on.

The simple check-ups may include a thorough examination of the mouth, gentle cleaning (if required), and an assessment of the need for fluoride. In addition, a demonstration of the proper home care can also be performed to maintain the new and healthy teeth.

In preparation for the first visit, parents should play some kind of 'dentist' game at home, such as counting the family members teeth, to be accustomed to opening his/her mouth. Parents should also have a back-up plan in case the child is not cooperative. Medical records should also be provided in order to understand the child's complete medical history.

Regardless of when you first decide to bring your child in to see the dentist, my recommendation is to bring the child in sooner rather than later before any serious conditions arise. This will help to build the child's trust in the dentist and make each visit less stressful and more fun.

If you have any questions about this or any past articles, then feel free to email me at ask@stoneycreekdental.ca.

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