THE PEDIATRIC DENTIST

First Visit Checklist

Getting ready for your child's first dental visit

Child's name: _____ First tooth: _____ Visit: _____

WHEN SHOULD THE FIRST VISIT HAPPEN?

Within six months of the first tooth appearing, and no later than the first birthday, even if no teeth have appeared yet.

BEFORE THE VISIT

- [ ] Choose a time when your child is usually rested and not hungry.
- [ ] Bring a comfort toy if helpful, and write down your questions.

KEEP IT LOW-KEY

Don't make a big deal of the visit or talk about it too much. Keep it routine, for example: “The dentist will count your teeth and help keep them healthy.” Avoid “Don't worry, it won't hurt” or “There's nothing to fear.”

SIMPLE WAYS TO GET READY, DEPENDING ON YOUR CHILD'S AGE

Read a picture book about going to the dentist together, count your child's teeth in a mirror as an everyday activity, play “dentist” with a favorite toy by taking turns looking in its mouth, and practice sitting on your lap or a knee for a few seconds at a time.

WHAT TO TELL THE DENTIST

- [ ] Feeding (breast, bottle, cup), food and drinks
- [ ] Pacifier or thumb sucking; brushing and toothpaste
- [ ] Medical conditions, medicines or allergies
- [ ] Sensory sensitivities, past difficult experiences or other concerns

QUESTIONS I'D LIKE TO ASK

- [ ] How should I brush, and how much fluoride toothpaste should I use?
- [ ] Does my child need fluoride varnish?
- [ ] Is there anything to change about food, drinks or sucking habits?
- [ ] Does anything need treatment or monitoring? When should we come back?

WHAT TO EXPECT

A look at the teeth and mouth, and advice for you. Babies and toddlers may stay on your lap. Crying or refusing to open does not mean the visit has failed; the dentist can adjust to your child.

DON'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT APPOINTMENT IF...

Your child has tooth pain, an injury to the mouth or teeth, bleeding that won't stop, or swelling on the cheek or gum. Contact their dentist. For facial swelling that spreads, call right away. For trouble breathing or swallowing, seek emergency care immediately.

General information only. Does not replace your child's dentist's advice.