

**Good oral hygiene is linked to better long term health outcomes, so start early on preventive dental care. Dental decay is the most common chronic infectious illness for infants and toddlers and the number one cause of children needing general anaesthetic. It's preventable!**

## **Prevention**

Primary prevention includes starting early: get your baby ready by cleaning his or her mouth and gums every day even before baby teeth come in!

Move to regular teeth cleaning with a small toothbrush as soon as those baby teeth come in; use a smear of fluoridated toothpaste, and supervise teeth brushing until age 10.

Tooth decay is the most prevalent of infectious diseases in children. It affects growth and development and can result in significant pain which interferes with sleeping and learning. Vancouver Coastal has made a short, practical You Tube Video called "Tooth Brushing for Young Children up to 3 Years of Age". Please [click here](#) to view.

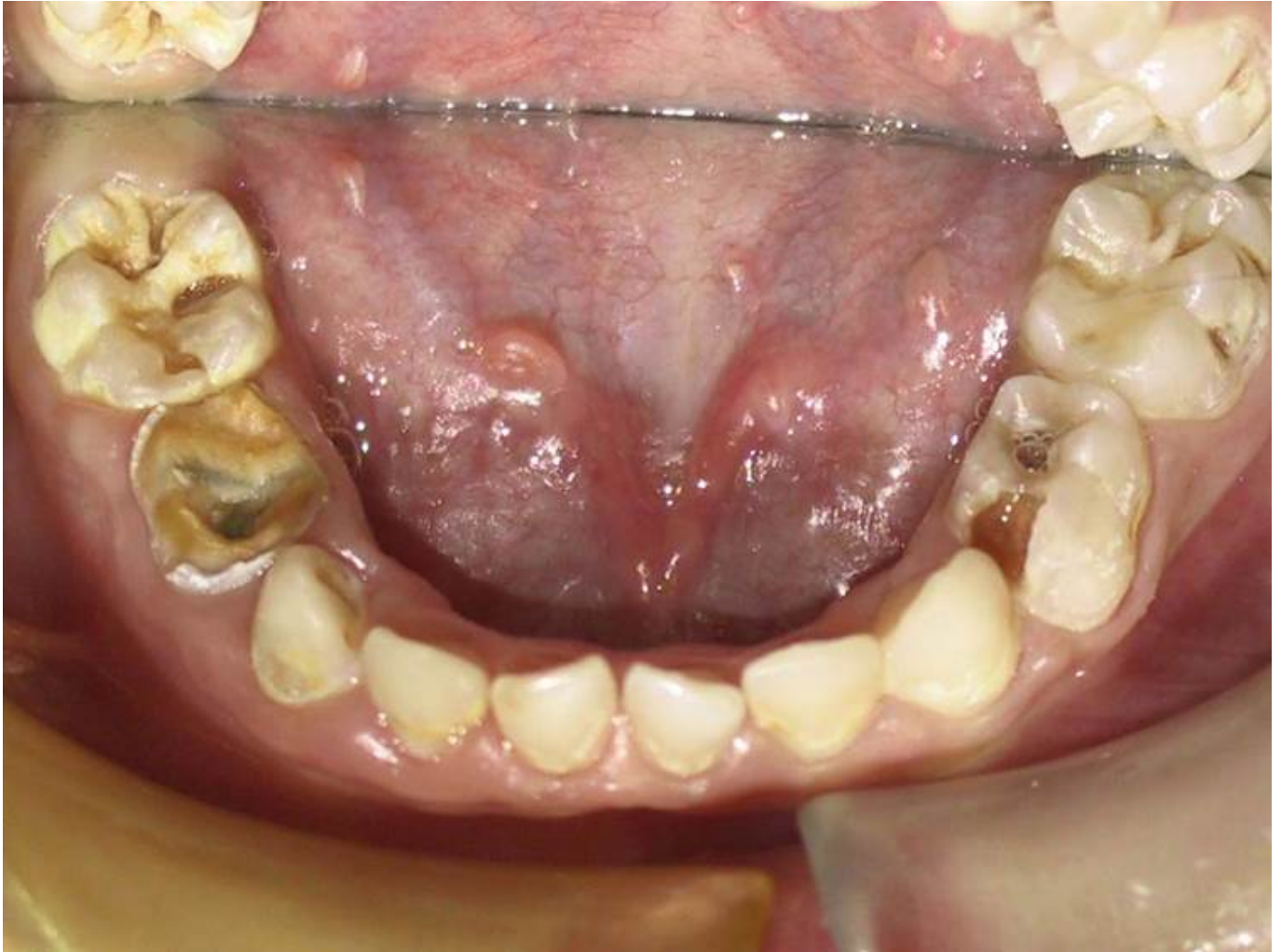
Here is a link to the Canadian Dental Association website for more information on dental care including how to brush teeth well. [www.cda-adc.ca](http://www.cda-adc.ca)

Encourage your child to rinse with water soon after drinks and snacks. Avoid carbonated (fizzy) drinks at all times, as their acidity breaks down the tooth surface at an alarming rate.

Move to open cup feeding as soon as possible. Try to wean your child from bottles and sippy-cups, which allow for a longer contact with milk or juice that encourage the growth of bacteria. The more bacteria in the mouth, the more prone to cavities your child will be.



Cavities On Front Teeth of A Child



Cavities On Back Teeth of A Child

### **Get Your Child's Teeth Checked**

It is very important to have your child's mouth and teeth examined by a qualified health care provider by age 1. Early assessment and diagnosis of a developing problem will enable you to prevent the progression of cavities or any other condition.



Dental Examination Of A Child



Dental Examination Of A Child by A Physician

### **Flouride Varnish**

When early signs of caries are found, your dentist can take simple actions to prevent progression to severe decay.



Early Cavities On Front Teeth



Early Cavities On Front Teeth Arrested By Fluoride Varnish Application



## Fluoride Varnish For Stopping Early Cavities

Fluoride varnish painted on your toddler's teeth can provide further protection by making tooth enamel stronger.

Each health authority has a public health program for access to this service.

- [Fraser Health](#)
- [Interior Health](#)
- [Northern Health](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal](#)
- [Island Health](#)

The provincial government is funding a Complex Medical Dental (CMD) pilot project led by the BC Dental Association (BCDA). The pilot will create new opportunities to receive dental coverage for recipients of disability assistance, income assistance, and their families. For



more information on this program, please [click here](#).

## **Dental Restoration**

Chronic illness and disabilities can result in defective formation of tooth enamel, and the child should be seen more often for dental care.

Should your child need extensive dental restoration work or be unable to cooperate with dental work, service can be provided with sedation or general anesthetic. Your family doctor, dentist or paediatrician will refer you to regional pediatric dentists providing these services. Wait lists are long, so plan ahead and don't wait for a crisis as dental infections and tooth abscesses can result in serious complications and are painful for children. Severe decay in baby teeth can damage permanent teeth when they are developing in the jaw bones.



Healthy Dentition In A Child



Cavities In A Child



Infections And Abscess In A Child



### Advanced Cavities In A Child

Dental care can be expensive if you don't have extended healthcare benefits. There are support programs through the [MCFD Healthy Kids Program](#) which may apply to your family if you are low income.

Children with jaw and teeth alignment problems that come from growth problems (disease or birth defects) who need orthodontic treatment MAY be eligible for coverage through a special MSP program, which is accessed individually with support letters from your medical team and dentist/ orthodontist.

Please [click here](#) to access the form to apply for this coverage.

For an explanation of malocclusion and orthodontics, please [click here](#).

## **Useful Links**

The [BC Dental Association](#) also has a very helpful and informative site for patients of all ages.

Another resource is [Healthy Families BC](#).