# Taking Care of Your Baby's Teeth

For Parents of Children Ages Birth to 3 Years

West Virginia Department of Health
Bureau for Public Health
Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health
Oral Health Program

350 Capitol Street, Room 427 Charleston, West Virginia 25301-3714 (304) 558-5388

The West Virginia Department of Health does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its programs for clientele on a basis of sex, race, color, nation, origin, religion, age, political affiliation or handicap.





## Are baby teeth important?

Have you ever heard that baby teeth don't matter because they will be replaced by permanent teeth? That's not true. They are very important for:

- Eating
- Speaking
- Smiling
- Self esteem
- Overall health
- Jaw development
- Holding space



Also, the healthier the baby teeth, the better chance of having healthy adult teeth.

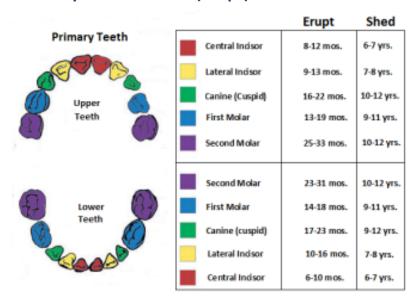
# So what can you do to keep your baby's teeth healthy?

- Wipe your baby's teeth once a day with a clean damp washcloth.
- Limit sweets and sweet drinks (such as pop and juice). If you give your baby a bottle at nap or bed time, fill it only with water.
- Brush the teeth as soon as they come in with a soft infant toothbrush.
- · Check the teeth for early signs of decay.
- Ask your doctor or dentist if you need fluoride drops.
- Drink tap or bottled (nursery) water with fluoride.
- Visit the dentist by age 1.

#### **Teething**

What about teething? For most babies, the lower middle incisors are the first teeth. They come in around 6-10 months. Most babies have all their baby teeth by the time they are 2 years old.

# When do baby teeth come in (erupt)?



## These are ways you can make teething easier:

• Rub the baby's gums gently with a clean cloth. • Give the baby a cold teething ring or a cool, <u>clean</u> washcloth to chew.