

A child's first visit should occur within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth. This will usually be around 2 – 3 years of age.

WHY?

To . . .

- Educate parents on how to care for these first teeth and the ones that will follow
- Help evaluate the diet patterns and identify potential risk factors for cavities
- Establish a place to go and number to call in case of dental emergency (especially when infants start toddling!)
- Establish a plan to prevent cavity causing bacteria from infecting your infant's mouth. Allow helpful bacteria to establish instead.
 - This can only be done before age 2, but the earlier the better.
 - Less harmful bacteria = lower risk for cavities.
- Learn proper use of sippy cups and pacifiers to decrease growth and development problems that can lead to braces.
- Evaluate fluoride intake and keep it within safe levels.
- Evaluate tooth eruption and discuss eruption patterns.

BUT MY PHYSICIAN TOLD ME TO START AT AGE 5 – 6 YEARS

- This was common teaching based on knowledge available when they were trained.
- Now we know that baby teeth are important and the cavity process and risk factors are developing before age 3
 - Baby teeth determine positions of adult teeth
 - Decay in baby teeth predict lifetime risk for cavities
 - Significant dental issues at age three add to parental emotional and financial trauma
 - Significant dental issues at age three would have been easily preventable with coaching at age 1

