

Is your Child at Risk for Cavities?

Dear Parent: The checklist on the left below is designed to help monitor your child's dental development. The notes on the right provide you with some helpful tips. If you answer "no" to any of the questions below, your child is at greater risk of developing cavities in their teeth.

Yes	No	Question	Guidance for Parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Are your child's teeth cleaned daily by an adult?	Parents should start to brush their child's teeth as soon as they appear. Brushing 2 times a day – morning and night is an important habit to develop.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Are your child's teeth white and shiny?	Even toddlers can get tooth decay. You should check your child's teeth once a month. Lift the lip to see the teeth right up to the gum line. Any chalky white areas, brown marks or chipped areas should be checked out by a dental professional.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Has your child been seen by a dentist or a dental hygienist?	By their first birthday a child should have teeth checked by a dentist or dental hygienist to prevent dental problems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Does your child drink mainly from a cup without a lid?	By 12 months a child should be learning to drink from a regular cup without a lid. Do not let your child use a bottle or sippy cup as a pacifier. Frequent drinking or sipping on milk, juice or anything sweetened with sugar helps cause cavities. If your child is thirsty between meals, plain water is best.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Does your child sleep without a bottle?	If your child must have a bottle to fall asleep, fill it with water only. If you are still breastfeeding at night, take your child off the breast when through nursing so the milk is swallowed and not allowed to pool around the teeth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Does your child have set times for meals and snacks?	Snacking too often causes cavities, especially if foods are sticky or sweet. Your child should have no more than 5-6 set meals and snacks during the day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Has your child's sister or brother been cavity free for over 2 years?	Statistics show that children are at higher risk of developing cavities if other family member currently have or have had cavities in the past 2 years.

If your child is at risk of developing cavities, use a smear (size of a grain of rice) of fluoridated toothpaste 2 times each day with no rinsing afterward. Only a parent or an adult should apply the toothpaste. Toothpaste should be kept out of reach of young children.

A small amount of fluoride every day is effective in preventing cavities. Most of our communities in Simcoe County have no fluoride added to the water. Most towns in Muskoka have fluoride added to the water. Fluoride toothpaste is an important source of fluoride.