

HOW TO SELECT A PEDIATRIC DENTIST

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Parents want the best for their children, whether their children are at school, camp or the dental office. Two important steps will get your child the best dental care. First, choose the right dental professional for your child. Second, be an active partner in the child's dental health decisions. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, one in five American children aged six to 11 suffers from tooth decay in their permanent (adult) teeth, and 28% of two to five year olds have tooth decay.

What is a Pediatric Dentist?

Pediatric dentists are specially trained for children's unique oral health needs. The education of Pediatric dentists includes two to three years of specialized study after becoming a dentist where they study child psychology, growth and development, and special health care needs. Pediatric dentists take a large number of continuing education courses each year to provide the latest and the best oral care treatment for your child. Pediatric dentists serve the oral health needs and issues for children from infancy through adolescence and patients with special health care needs.

The American Dental Association recommends that a dentist examine a child within six months after the first tooth comes in and no later than the first birthday.

First of all, ask for a tour of the pediatric dental office and take your child with you. You may find talking parrots, toy dinosaurs with toothbrushes, video games, or child-sized dental equipment. Make the visit positive and not rushed so that your child will want to return.

BEFORE the dental visit ask these questions:

- Does the dentist have special training or interest in treating children?
- Is the dentist a member of the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry?
- Is the dental office set up for children? For example, does it offer toys, books, games or child-sized furniture?
- How does the dental office deal with emergencies?
- Is the office conveniently located to your home or child's school?
- Does the practice accept your dental benefit plan?

AFTER the dental visit ask these questions:

- Was your child seen promptly?
- Were you asked for a complete medical and dental history for your child?

- Was the dentist gentle but thorough when examining your child's mouth?
- Did the dentist or staff talk to your child, encouraging her involvement in dental health?
- Were you informed about your child's tooth development, the causes and prevention of dental disease, and appropriate dental care at home?
- Were your questions treated with concern and respect?
- Was the visit positive for your child?

Going to the dentist should be a positive experience for you and your child. Your child's dental health is very important to the health and well being of your child. Baby teeth are as important as the permanent adult teeth. Be proactive and get involved in your child's dental health.

Find more information at:

American Dental Association www.mouthpower.org

Canadian Dental Association www.healthyteeth.org

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