

## Promoting Infant Oral Health Care

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Infant oral health is the foundations upon which preventive education and dental care must be built to enhance the opportunity for a lifetime free from preventable oral disease [1].

Poor oral health is a major public health problem especially in the underdeveloped countries. Caries is the most common chronic oral condition among children. Early childhood caries and the more severe form of ECC can be particularly virulent forms of caries, beginning soon after tooth eruption, developing on smooth surfaces, progressing rapidly and having a lasting detrimental impact on the dentition [2-7]. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention reports that caries is the most prevalent infectious disease. More than 40% of children have caries by the time they reach kindergarten [8].

Parents play an important role in achieving the best oral health outcomes for their young children. Very young children are dependent on their mothers to attend to their oral hygiene and feed them [9]. It has been reported that the children of mothers who have received oral health education during pregnancy have better oral health status. The association of poor maternal oral health to pre-term/low birth weight baby has been documented. Enamel defects are more common in children born prematurely, thus making these teeth more susceptible to early childhood caries [10].

Child's oral health is a particularly important part. Earlier a child receives preventive oral health services, the lesser he or she is at risk of developing dental disease. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that infants should have an initial oral evaluation within six months of the eruption of the first primary tooth but no later than one year of age [11].

Physicians are the first health professionals to come in contact with the expectant parents and parents of infants [12]. Parents do visit the physicians for examination and immunizations for their children. So, these visits are an ideal time to provide screening, anticipatory guidance and appropriate need based referrals.

Oral health is an integral to general health, so one should emphasize on the importance of oral health, prevention of most common dental disease like dental caries. So, Establishing a dental home, providing parental counselling, anticipatory guidance may help. Organising community based activities, oral health camps, may be used to emphasize on the importance of oral health.

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