

# Infant Oral Health:

## Benign Floral Enhancement and Anticipatory Guidance

Derived from the AAP's policy statement: "Oral Health Risk Assessment Timing and Establishment of the Dental Home", May 2003.

General anticipatory guidance for the **mother (or other intimate caregiver)** before and during the colonization process should include the following:

- **Caries Removal** - the parent should have an oral examination and all carious lesions treated as soon practical.
- **Diet** - the parent should be instructed to consume fruit juices only at meals and to avoid all carbonated beverages including sports/power drinks during the first 30 months of the infant's life.
- **Oral hygiene** - the parent should be instructed to brush thoroughly twice daily (morning and evening) and to floss at least once every day.
- **Fluoride** - the parent should be instructed to use a fluoride toothpaste approved by the American Dental Association and rinse every night with an alcohol-free over-the-counter mouth rinse with .05% sodium fluoride.
- **Delay of colonization** - parents should be educated to prevent early colonization of dental flora in their infants by avoiding sharing of utensils (i.e., shared spoons, cleaning a dropped pacifier with their saliva, etc).
- **Xylitol chewing gums** - recent evidence suggests that the use of xylitol chewing gum (4 pieces per day by mother) had a significant impact on decreasing the child's caries rate.

General anticipatory guidance for the **infant (0 to 3 years of age)** should include the following:

- **Diet** - after the eruption of the first teeth, the parent should provide fruit juices (not to exceed 1 cup per day) during meals only. Carbonated beverages, power/sport drinks, juice boxes should be excluded from the child's diet. Infants should not be placed in bed with a bottle containing anything other than water. Ideally, infants should have their mouths cleansed with a damp cloth after feedings.
- **Oral hygiene** - the parent should begin to brush the child's teeth as soon as they erupt (twice daily, morning and evening) and floss between the child's teeth once every day as soon as the teeth contact one another.
- **Fluoride** - all children should have optimal exposure to topical and systemic fluoride. Caution should be exercised in the administration of all fluoride-containing products. The specific considerations of the judicious administration of fluoride should be reviewed and tailored to the unique needs of each patient. Review articles with applicable fluoride recommendations and supplementation algorithms are available.