



Bright Futures™

prevention and health promotion for infants,
children, adolescents, and their families™

The Bright Futures Guidelines,
Third Edition
Health Promotion Information Sheet

PROMOTING ORAL HEALTH

The Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, Third Edition features 10 health promotion themes. These state-of-the-art discussions focus on topics of key importance to families and health care professionals in their common mission to promote the health and well-being of children from birth through adolescence. These 10 themes are also woven into the 31 health supervision visits.



What you'll find in the "Promoting Oral Health" chapter

Overview: Setting the stage

Oral health is critically important to the overall health and well-being of children and adolescents. It covers a range of health promotion and disease prevention concerns, including dental caries (a preventable and transmissible infectious disease that is the most common chronic disease in children); periodontal health; proper development and alignment of facial bones, jaws, and teeth; oral diseases and conditions; and trauma or injury to the mouth and teeth. Oral health is an important and continuing health supervision issue for the health care professional.

In-depth: Exploring the topic

The introductory section of this chapter discusses the importance of a dental home, the use of supplemental fluoride, and the oral health of children and youth with special health care needs.

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Infancy: Birth to 11 Months

- Oral hygiene and feeding practices that promote oral health
- Oral health risk assessment

Early Childhood: 1 to 4 Years

- Oral hygiene, fluoride, and feeding practices that promote oral health
- Oral health risk assessment
- Other oral health issues, such as pacifier use, and finger or thumb sucking

Middle Childhood: 5 to 10 Years

- Oral hygiene, fluoride, and nutrition practices that promote oral health
- Other oral health issues, such as finger or other sucking habits, tobacco use, and traumatic injury to the mouth

Adolescence: 11 to 21 Years

- Oral hygiene, fluoride, and nutrition practices that promote oral health
- Other oral health issues, including periodontal conditions, and traumatic injury to the mouth



How the theme of “Promoting Oral Health” fits into Bright Futures visits

Each Bright Futures health supervision visit is structured around *five priority topics* that help focus the health care professional’s guidance to parents and children. Some priorities are unique to a particular visit; others are featured often and their components evolve in concert with the child’s development.

These examples of priorities, taken from selected visits, show how Bright Futures helps health care professionals talk to families about promoting oral health during each developmental stage:

Infancy: 6 Month Visit

Oral health, including supplemental fluoride, oral hygiene and using a soft toothbrush, and avoiding the use of a bottle in bed

Early Childhood: 15 Month Visit

Healthy teeth, with guidance focused on daily brushing, transmission of caries-promoting bacteria, and bottle usage

Middle Childhood: 5 and 6 Year Visits

Oral health, including regular visits with dentist, daily brushing and flossing, and adequate fluoride

Late Adolescence: 18 to 21 Year Visits

Physical growth and development, including physical and oral health, body image, healthy eating, and physical activity

Additional Resources on Promoting Oral Health

- American Academy of Pediatrics aap.org
- HealthyChildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics healthychildren.org
- Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration mchb.hrsa.gov
- Family Voices IMPACT on Health & Wellness for Families fv.impact.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Children’s Oral Health aap.org/commpeps/dochs/oralhealth
- National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center mchoralhealth.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cdc.gov/oralhealth

Bright Futures is a national health care promotion and disease prevention initiative that uses a developmentally-based approach to address children’s health needs in the context of family and community.

Bright Futures Health Promotion Themes

Family Support	Physical Activity
Child Development	Oral Health
Mental Health	Safety and Injury Prevention
Healthy Weight	Community Relationships and Resources
Healthy Nutrition	Healthy Sexual Development and Sexuality

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