Protect your Baby's Teeth

A child that goes to bed with a bottle or has one in his mouth too often can:

- Have ear infections.
- Have problems with his teeth. This is called "Baby Bottle Tooth Decay."

"Baby Bottle Tooth Decay" is caused by some foods that remain in the mouth for too long. These can be: milk or formula, soda pop, fruit juices, drinks or foods that have sugar.

After each feeding, clean your baby's gums and teeth with a clean damp washcloth or gauze pad. At about age two, start using a soft toothbrush.

Learn from the dentist about protecting your baby's teeth with fluoride. Take your child to the dentist around the age of two; after that, take him every six months.

Breastfeeding is the best way to feed an infant, but if you bottle feed:

- Give a bottle to your baby at meal times only. In hot weather, give your baby water in the bottle. Feed water and juices in a cup as soon as your baby can sit up and is ready to drink from a cup.
- Never put your baby to bed with a bottle. If you must, fill the bottle with water only.
- Instead of putting the baby to bed with a bottle, try singing, playing music, reading or telling a story; rock the baby or give him a soft toy.
- Do not use pacifiers. If you use them, do not dip the nip of the pacifier in sweet liquids like honey or syrup.

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