



# Your Own Dental Home

Dental homes promote good health.



Your dental home is the office where you and your family will go to receive your oral health care. It may be part of your neighborhood health center or a dental office near your home, school, or work.

We call your preferred dental practice a dental home, but it is more of a *relationship* than a *place*. This is because you and your family can count on the dentist and the office team getting to know you and your health needs. It is where you can learn about good oral health, ask questions, and trust you will get great care. Your dental home delivers oral health care in a coordinated, family-centered way.<sup>1</sup>

## When to Visit Your Dental Home

Many people believe that children don't need to go to the dentist until they start school. But this isn't true! Your child's first visit to the dentist should come by age one or their first tooth.<sup>1</sup> Your dental home helps establish a lifetime of healthy oral habits. And it cares for your children's teeth early, before there's a problem.

Children aged 21 and younger should visit their dental home twice a year to get their teeth cleaned and checked for cavities. They may need to return to the dentist to have cavities or other issues fixed. Each time they go to the same dental home for a cleaning, the dentist and their team will learn more about your child's teeth and overall health. They are better able to note changes and treat potential problems before they get too big. Cavities are the most chronic disease among children aged 6 to 17. Yet they are mostly preventable with regular dental home visits and good habits at home!<sup>2</sup>



## The Role of Your Dental Home

Here are the important things a dental home gives you and your child:<sup>3</sup>

- Complete oral health care
- Instruction on proper mouth care
- Nutrition counseling
- Preventive treatment and exams
- Thorough disease assessment
- Guidance about your child's growth and development
- Education about oral health issues
- Referrals for more serious conditions

## Relationship with the Community

Another important role of the dental home is its connection with your community. Your primary care doctor, teachers, and other figures in your child's life work together. Together, they promote the importance of good oral health. That can help lead to good overall health.

Picking a pediatrician at the time of your child's birth is essential. This is a relationship that could see your child through college. Likewise, choosing your child's dental home before their first birthday is essential. It can help stop tooth decay before it has a chance to start.

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1 <https://www.aapd.org/research/oral-health-policies--recommendations/Dental-Home/#:~:targetText=A%20Dental%20Home%20is%20a,way%20by%20a%20licensed%20dentist.>, 2018.

2 [https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/disease/dental\\_caries.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/disease/dental_caries.html), September 2016.

3 [https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4\\_OralHealth.pdf](https://brightfutures.aap.org/Bright%20Futures%20Documents/BF4_OralHealth.pdf), accessed November 2019.

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