Breastfeeding and Baby’s Teeth

**WHY** should I Breastfeed?

- Breastmilk is natural and the most nutritious food for your baby
- Breastfeeding helps your baby develop stronger jaw muscles and properly positioned teeth
- Health Canada recommends feeding your baby only breastfeeding for the first 6 months, and continued breastfeeding, with appropriate complementary foods, for up to two years or beyond
- Breastfed babies may still develop tooth decay, so mouth care and healthy dental habits are important!

**HOW** do I Keep Baby Teeth Healthy?

- Breastfed babies need daily Vitamin D3 drops (minimum 400 IU) to help develop strong teeth. If you live in a northern community ask your health care provider if your baby needs more Vitamin D.
- Wipe baby’s gums with a clean and damp cloth
  - Try: after feeding
  - at bath time
  - before bed
- Brush baby’s first tooth with a soft toothbrush 2x a day
- Lift your child’s lip at least once a month to check their teeth. Chalky white lines or brown spots along the gum line is the start of tooth decay!

**How Much Toothpaste Should I Use?**

*Children from birth to 3 years:* ask your dental team if your child is at risk for tooth decay*

- **If child is at risk:** use a small amount (the size of a grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste
- **If child is not at risk:** only use water

*A child may be at risk of early childhood tooth decay if the child: is living in an area with non-fluoridated water, has white chalky areas or cavities, has lots of sugary snacks/dinks between meals, teeth are not brushed daily, or caregiver has tooth decay.

References Available Upon Request

Healthy Smile Happy Child 2008. Revised September 2014