

## The Surprising Truth About Cavities In Children !



If a parent thinks their child is too young to visit the pediatric dentist, they would be surprised to know that is absolutely wrong ! A baby's teeth are at risk of dental caries long before they taste their first piece of candy.

Parents often assume that kids get cavities because they're lax about brushing and flossing. That's true to an extent, but what few people know is that tooth decay (dental caries) is caused by specific bacteria, which spreads easily within families, and can last a lifetime. Dental caries is more common among young children than any other chronic illness, including asthma and diabetes.

### **What Causes Cavities In Toddlers & Children?**

Tooth decay begins with a group of bacteria called **Mutans Streptococcus**. The bacteria feed on sugar and produce acid that eats away at the structure of teeth by depleting calcium. The bacteria also create plaque—a yellowish film that builds up on teeth and contains even more enamel-eroding acid. Once an area without calcium becomes big enough, the underlying surface of the tooth collapses, and gives way to a cavitation.

Studies have shown that moms (rather than dads) typically play a big role in transferring the bacteria to their children before age 2. It happens before birth, (**Vertical Transmission of Mutans Streptococcus** to the foetus through the transplacental route) and also after birth (**Horizontal transmission of Mutans Streptococcus** to the baby when one transfers saliva into the baby's mouth—repeatedly eating from the same spoon as the baby or letting the toddler brush his teeth with the parent's toothbrush, kissing the baby on the lips, sharing food items. ).

Once a child's mouth has become colonized with Mutans Streptococcus , he'll be prone to cavities in his baby and permanent teeth, that can eventually cause pain and difficulty while eating. The key role that bacteria plays in decay may also explain why some kids even after consuming tons of candy are lucky enough to avoid dental problems.

If a parent has had trouble with their teeth, they would need to take responsibility for their child's dental health—just like one would be vigilant and take care of their child's diet, if there is a known history of high cholesterol running in the family. Unfortunately, antibiotics can't get rid of the cavity-causing bacteria in a child's mouth. That is why the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) actually urges pediatricians to ask and counsel parents about their own dental history by the time their baby is 6 months old. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) as well as the American Academy Of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommend a **Routine Preventive Oral Health Examination** at the Pediatric Dental Clinic by the time the baby is 6 months of age.