

# How does cleaning my teeth and gums help my child?

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*Did you know that bacterial germs in the mouths of parents and caretakers can be passed to their babies and toddlers?*

**Yes!** The bacteria that cause cavities and other oral diseases are infectious and contagious. Recent studies have shown that moms who have or had cavities in the past can pass these bacteria to their child. **But how?**

Have you ever tested your baby or toddler's food with the same spoon you are using to feed them? Have you ever licked a pacifier that has fallen on the ground to clean it off?



By practicing good oral hygiene habits, like brushing your teeth, tongue and gums with a SOFT bristled brush twice a day, flossing, and not sharing eating utensils or other items that have gone in your mouth, you are helping to stop the spread of cavity causing bacteria to your child.



Oral diseases have been shown to cause other health problems too. Pregnant women who have gum infections and other oral diseases may be more likely to have pre-term deliveries and low birth weight babies. Regular brushing and flossing are important for preventing gum disease, especially during pregnancy. Heart disease and diabetes have also been linked to gum disease.



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## Xylitol what?

Xylitol (z-eye-lit-all) is a natural sweetener found in fibrous vegetables and fruit, as well as in corn cobs. Xylitol tastes and looks exactly like sugar, but it has 40% fewer calories and 75% fewer carbohydrates than sugar and there is no nasty after-taste either.



Xylitol is available in many different forms and can be used to replace sugar in cooking and baking or as a sweetener for drinks. It is also used as a sweetener in chewing gum and mints.

Xylitol is not only a safe and natural sweetener; it's also good for your teeth. Besides reducing cavities, regular use of Xylitol can reduce the number of bacteria in your mouth that cause dental disease. Studies have shown that parents and caregivers that chew Xylitol gum on a regular basis have less decay causing bacteria in their mouth. Therefore, these parents and caregivers are less likely to spread this bacteria to their child's mouth if they do share utensils, straws and drinking cups.

## Chewing Gum with Xylitol:

**Spry Sugar  
Free Gum**

**Xylichew  
Gum**

**Ice Breakers  
Ice Cubes**



**Carefree  
Koolerz**

**Trident  
Tropical Twist  
Sugarless Gum**