

Your Child's Medicine and their Teeth

What does your child's medicine have to do with their teeth?

Children taking medicines routinely can be at higher risk of developing cavities. Medicine in the form of liquid, inhalers, tablets or capsules can be heavily sweetened with sugars called sucrose, so that they taste better to your child.



If your child is taking medicine, try to remember to clean their teeth afterward. For infants, gently wipe their teeth and gums with a soft cloth. For toddlers and older children, brushing or rinsing with water will help to remove the sugary residue.

If your child takes medicine on a daily basis, talk with your pediatrician about prescribing medicine with little or no sugar if possible.



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Many medicines have side effects. Over 400 medicines have the side-effect of reducing the amount of saliva or spit, causing a "dry mouth." Saliva helps to "rinse" the teeth during the day helping to reduce cavities and other dental diseases. If your child has less saliva, he or she won't be receiving this constant rinsing benefit. Also, children taking medicines may ask for drinks more often; be sure to keep track of the frequency and amount of sugary substances they are receiving and whenever possible offer water.

Categories of Medications that Cause Dry Mouth:

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| ■ Antihistamines | ■ Anti-Psychotic |
| ■ Anti-anxiety | ■ Anticonvulsant |
| ■ Anti-Inflammatory | ■ Antihypertensive |
| ■ Muscle Relaxants | ■ Sedatives |
| ■ Bronchodilators | ■ Antidepressants |
| ■ Antispasmodics | ■ Long term antibiotic use |



*If you're not sure if your child is taking a medication in one of these categories, check with your doctor or pharmacist. They can help you.