Your Child's Healthy Smile Checklist

A printable, age-by-age guide for parents — from the first tooth to the teenage years

Alta Loma Dental Care
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Every Day at Home

Check off each habit as part of your family's daily routine.

- ☐ **Brush 2 times a day** (morning and bedtime) for a full 2 minutes
- ☐ **Use fluoride toothpaste** — a rice-grain smear under age 3; a pea-sized amount from age 3
- ☐ **Help with brushing** until your child can tie their own shoes well (around age 7–8)
- ☐ **Floss** any teeth that touch — floss picks make this easy for small hands
- ☐ **Offer water after snacks** and between meals
- ☐ **Keep sugary drinks and treats to mealtimes**, not all-day sipping or grazing
- ☐ **No bottle in bed** — only water if a drink is needed
- ☐ **Keep it positive** — songs, sticker charts, and brushing together build the habit

Age-by-Age Milestones

Age	What to do
Birth – 12 months	Wipe gums with a soft, damp cloth after feedings. When the first tooth appears, brush twice daily with a rice-grain smear of fluoride toothpaste. **Schedule the first dental visit by age 1.**
Ages 1 – 3	Keep brushing twice daily; switch to a pea-sized amount of toothpaste at age 3. Start flossing when teeth touch. Begin weaning the pacifier — most harm is avoided if the habit ends by age 3.
Ages 4 – 6	Brush together and supervise closely. Watch for thumb-sucking past age 3–4 and ask us for gentle tips. Checkups every 6 months with fluoride varnish.
Ages 6 – 12	First permanent molars arrive around age 6 — **ask about dental sealants** (again around age 12 for second molars). Keep supervising brushing until about age 8. Consider a mouthguard for sports.
Teens	Hand over the routine, but spot-check brushing. Discuss retainers or braces care, wisdom teeth, and sports protection at checkups.

At Every 6-Month Checkup

- ☐ Gentle exam and professional cleaning
- ☐ Fluoride varnish to strengthen enamel
- ☐ Dental sealants when molars are ready
- ☐ Digital X-rays when clinically needed (low dose, with shielding)
- ☐ Parent coaching — brushing, diet, and what to watch for at home

Call Us Sooner If...

- [ ] You see white spots, discoloration, or a dark spot on any tooth
- [ ] Your child chips or injures a tooth — even a small chip
- [ ] Gums look swollen, or your child is in pain
- [ ] Thumb-sucking or pacifier use continues past age 3
- [ ] A toothache keeps your child up at night

First visit by age 1 · Checkups every 6 months

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This checklist is general guidance, not a substitute for a dental exam. Every child is different — we personalize a plan at each visit.