

## *Just to Let You Know*

How old before they should see you?

This is a question we are often asked by the proud parents of a new child.

Not how old but how young.

We prefer to see children with their parents as soon as the parents are happy to bring them along to the practice. They can sit in a car seat or be cuddled by one of the dental team.

It gives us a chance to chat about childrens' dental health long before they have any teeth or any problems.

We want the first trip to see Christine to be planned and fun. A happy child leaving the practice wearing a smile and a sticker is the most important outcome for all of us.

From the moment the baby teeth start to erupt and the child starts to move around independently, whether crawling, just pulling themselves up on to furniture or using toys to support them, they can fall and damage teeth.

We do not want the first trip to see Christine happen as a result of an injury to their front teeth. They will be distressed, the parent will be more distressed and we may become unwittingly associated with the unhappiness of the event.

**So please introduce us to your babies as early as possible.**

Let us tell you about good dietary habits and how to clean their little teeth when they erupt. We can explain about the use of fluoride and try to dispel any myths with some science.

Babies generally start to show signs of teeth at about 6 months. These are usually (but not always) the lower front teeth. Teething can be

associated with a red face, a desire to chew and dribbling.

A baby with a temperature and/or diarrhoea is likely to have an illness as there is no science to suggest that it could be caused by teething.

Homeopathic teething granules seem to help (no, we don't know why), a cold toy or frozen sticks of vegetables can provide relief as well.

All the baby teeth are usually erupted by 2 years of age. We need to establish good cleaning by parents as soon as possible. All the studies show that children should have their teeth cleaned by an adult up to 7 years.

We are now routinely applying Fluoride Varnish (known to many of our younger patients as the banana cream) as this has been shown to have a very beneficial effect in preventing dental decay.

Many adults had awful, traumatic experiences at the dentist in childhood. These experiences have shaped their attitude to dentistry and some will just never overcome the fear and gain confidence about attending.

We now want to have generations of adults of the future who are happy to attend, for the minimum of dental intervention.

**Any questions about child dental care please ask us before you "ask Jeeves", or Google for that matter!**

**Oct 2009**