

KNOW AND PREVENT: BABY BOTTLE SYNDROME

Baby Bottle Syndrome or Rampant Caries is a severe form of tooth decay that can affect milk teeth or permanent teeth in children. It is characterized by its speed of onset and progression, by the pattern of attack and its cause.

Most often, the cavities resulting from baby bottle syndrome occur when an infant falls asleep with a baby bottle containing a fermentable carbohydrate (milk, juice, or soda) in his/her mouth. When asleep, the liquid pools around the baby's teeth, and the bacteria from the liquid causes tooth decay and eventual cavities.

Widespread decay on most upper teeth with a crumbling powdery appearance, which is very soft to touch is characteristic of this syndrome. The lower teeth escape excess damage owing to the constant presence of saliva, aiding in the milk or sugars being washed away. Destruction is frequently both rapid and extensive, because of this Rampant Caries poses a challenge problem for both dentists and patients.

Rampant Caries is very commonly seen in cases where feeding with a bottle is continued even past 15

months of age. Typically once the children are 8-9 months old (and have got their first teeth), they are ready to move on to the sippy cup. Due to lack of awareness or simply giving in to the child's fuss, many parents continue to bottle feed.

There is also a common misconception that baby teeth do not need to be filled as they will eventually fall out. What parents do not realize is that these teeth are precursors to healthy permanent (adult) teeth and any infection on the baby teeth get transmitted to the tooth buds of the permanent teeth resulting in brownish

discolouration, which will stay on the teeth for life and make them susceptible to decay.

For comprehensive dental care solutions, contact:

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PREVENTION

Milk or water should constitute the majority of drinks given to young children.

For other drinks:

- Always follow manufacturers' instructions on usage and dilution of drinks
- Serve only at meal time and keep drinking times short
- Never leave infants alone with any drink
- Never use drinks on a dummy or as a comforter
- Ideally serve from a spoon, trainer beaker or cup, but not from a bottle
- Do not give at bedtime or during the night.

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