

## Pediatric Dentistry

Pediatric dentistry is a branch of dentistry that deals with the examination and management of dental health in children. Dental procedures are generally perceived as intimidating and painful experiences that most would like to avoid, especially among children. However, it is vital that children have their milk teeth checked regularly by pediatric dentists for evidence of caries and tooth decay. Pediatric (also paediatric or pædiatric) dentists promote the dental health of children as well as serve as educational resources for parents. It is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) that a dental visit should occur within six months after the presence of the first tooth or by a child's first birthday. The AAPD has said that it is important to establish a comprehensive and accessible ongoing relationship between the dentist and patient - referring to this as the patient's "dental home".[5] This is because early oral examination aids in the detection of the early stages of tooth decay. Early detection is essential to maintain oral health, modify aberrant habits, and treat as needed and as simply as possible. Additionally, parents are given a program of preventive home care (brushing, flossing and fluorides), a caries risk assessment, information on finger, thumb, and pacifier habits, advice on preventing injuries to the mouth and teeth of children, diet counseling, and information on growth and development.

### Malocclusion or misaligned teeth

A malocclusion describes when the teeth of the upper and lower jaws do not meet when the jaws are closed together. This can create problems with eating or speaking. The malocclusion may cause pain on biting or injuries to the insides of the mouth, gums and tongue. Pediatric dentists are responsible for addressing the problem of poorly aligned teeth using braces.

### Dental caries and tooth decay

Despite the fact that milk teeth are eventually shed to be replaced by permanent teeth, it is still important that these teeth are well maintained. Children have an increased likelihood of developing tooth decay and therefore cavities that can expose the inner dental pulp to bacteria and cause toothaches. Children tend to be more susceptible to dental plaque and tooth decay because they are more likely to eat sugary, sticky foods and not maintain their dental hygiene as well as older people might. Therefore, pediatric dentists commonly encounter tooth decay.