

# Your child's first dental visit

The first dental visit will be a new experience, so do not worry if your child is not keen to participate. Dental staff are trained to make your child feel comfortable. This factsheet is one of a collection developed for the Happy Teeth Program.

## When should I take my child?

Take your child for their first dental visit soon after their first birthday. A dental check-up at this early age will:

- allow your child to become familiar with the sights, sounds and smells of the dentist.
- allow early detection of tooth decay and other dental conditions
- enable dental staff to give advice and instruction on toothbrushing and on good eating habits.

## How can I help prepare my child?

- Allow your child to visit the dentist with you or with older siblings.
- Do not use words such as drill and needle. The dentist will use special words to explain things.
- Talk about the good things about visiting the dentist, such as counting teeth and learning how to care for them.
- Make the dental appointment an accepted part of a regular routine, not a special event.
- Arrange for the appointment to be in the morning so tiredness is not a problem.
- Arrive a little early so your child can become familiar with the new surroundings.

## Is there anything else I need to do?

- Inform the dental staff of any medical condition or past incident which may affect your child's behaviour and ability to cope. This will allow the dental team to adjust their approach.
- Accompany your child to the dentist.
- Be a passive observer, to enable dental staff to capture and hold your child's complete attention.

## Where can I take my child for a dental check-up?

- Holders of a Health Care Card or Pension Card are eligible for free dental care at public dental clinics located throughout Queensland.
- Children aged from four years and school children up to the completion of year 10 are eligible for free dental care from the Queensland School Dental Service.
- Private dentists are listed in the telephone directory. Private dentists charge fees that may be partly refunded by private health care cover.

## Reference

Adapted from Your Child's First Dental Visit, Health Department of Western Australia. May 1996.