

## Every Smile Counts



Developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits helps children to get a good start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. Recommendations for children's health are constantly changing as new information becomes available through research. Following are some new recommendations for good dental health from [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org):

1. Everyone, even infants, should be brushing with fluoride toothpaste, according to a recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics issued in September. This echoed recommendations made earlier in the year by the American Dental Association.
2. As soon as baby teeth begin erupting from the gums, parents should wipe them with fluoride toothpaste (the amount should be the size of a grain of rice) on a washcloth. Once the child reaches age 3, the amount can be increased to a pea-size.
3. Tap water is better for a baby than bottled water or nursery water. Tap water has fluoride, which is good for teeth. The only exception is if you are in an area that doesn't have safe tap water, but most places in the United States do have safe tap water.
4. Tap water doesn't need to be filtered unless it's from a well that hasn't been treated and could have some bacteria. In those cases, you would need to boil the water and then cool it before giving it to a child. You may choose to use the bottled water, but make sure it's bottled water with fluoride.

For additional information on Connecticut's oral health mission, vision and goals, visit the State Department of Public Health Office of Oral Health's web site at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3125&q=388844>.

