

Baby Bottles and Tooth Decay

Do you give your child a bottle at naptime or bedtime? Does your child drink from a bottle for most of the day? If so, your child's teeth may be in danger!

Only Liquids Belong in a Bottle

- Putting solid foods like oats, rice, avena (oats) or atole (a beverage made with corn or other grain) in a bottle is dangerous because it could cause your child to choke or vomit.

At Naptime and Bedtime, Only Plain Water Should Go in a Bottle

- It might seem that giving your child milk or formula before bed would help your child to have healthier teeth. But the natural sugars in both milk and formula will stay on the teeth and cause decay.

Adding Maizena, Sugar, Jello or Avena to a Bottle Will Cause Tooth Decay

- Your mother or grandmother may have added sugar, maizena (corn starch), jello or strained oats to their baby's bottles. They did this because they did not have infant formula and they thought that adding sugar or maizena would help their baby grow. Back then, popular ads showed that giving maizena to your baby would make them fat and healthy.

But what those ads didn't show was that maizena stays on a baby's teeth and gums and causes tooth decay!

You can keep your child's teeth and gums clean and healthy:

- Instead of using a bottle to comfort your child at bedtime, sing a song, read a story or give your baby a favorite blanket.
- If you feel you must give your child something before bed or naptime, just give plain water.
- After drinking sugary liquids, and before bed, use a damp washcloth to wipe off your child's teeth and gums.

References: 1. The American Dental Association, <http://www.ada.org/consumer/bottle.html>
2. "Su bebé: el biberón y el deterioro dental." University of Wisconsin Extension Service, 1994.

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