



CDA Position on **First Visit to the Dentist**

Early childhood caries remains a significant problem, as evidenced by numbers of children treated in hospitals for severe caries. Early childhood caries also has the potential to adversely affect the general health of young children.

The dentist, through a comprehensive review of an infant's medical history, oral evaluation, and environmental context, can identify patients at special risk for compromised oral health. Risk factors such as medical and social history, feeding patterns, presence of enamel anomalies, oral hygiene practice and fluoride availability can be identified by the age of one year. The Canadian Dental Association encourages the assessment of infants, by the dentist, to determine special risk, appropriate interventions and/or periodicity of future dental assessments, within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth or by 12 months of age. Special risk patients may require frequent assessments in order to determine appropriate management strategies.

The Canadian Dental Association supports educational and cooperative initiatives with other health care providers and caregivers to expedite the development of partnerships in related pre-natal and post-natal preventive and educational programs.

CDA Board of Directors

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