



What Parents Need to Know About Pediatric Dentistry in the First Year (and Beyond)



Do you remember the first time you visited the dentist? Maybe not, but if you're like many people, dental appointments probably weren't your favorite childhood activity.

Newtown Dentistry is changing that perception by making quality kids dental care fun. Dr. Christine Landes (Dr. Chris) and her team believe that dentistry is a lifelong journey, and dental care should be started young — and be great.

This guide is designed to answer your biggest questions about dental care for children and give you the information you need to care for your little ones' teeth. In these pages, you'll find everything from a checklist for dental care to the truth about common dental care myths, details about what to expect during visits, and more.

We invite you to keep this guide on hand as a reference. If you have any questions about this information or any other aspect of dental care for your kids, don't hesitate to give us a call.



What Makes a Pediatric Dentist Different?

For many people with dental phobias, their fears are rooted in childhood and their experiences with dental care. Unfortunately, many people associate seeing the dentist with pain, discomfort, sensory overload, and other negative experiences which can have long-term effects on their oral health. Research shows that dental fear and anxiety are strongly associated with tooth decay, tooth loss, and other

problems later in life.

Pediatric dentists like Dr. Chris are changing that by making dental visits a pleasant — even fun — experience for kids. That begins with a colorful, kid-friendly environment (Newtown Dentistry even has a treehouse for kids to play in!) and includes a care approach guided by child development, psychology, and the unique needs of young patients.



When you bring your child to a pediatric dentist, you can expect an experience rooted in making them (and you!) feel comfortable and safe. Care and treatment are focused on several areas, including education, prevention, early detection, and treatment.

Education

Dr. Chris wants to be your partner in helping you make the best choices for your child's dental health. Pediatric dentists not only teach families about kids dental care (brushing, flossing, etc.) but are also a trusted resource for information and advice on everything from how to select the right toothbrush and toothpaste to stopping thumb sucking.

Prevention

Much of kids dental care is focused on preventing cavities, injuries, and other common issues with oral health. Dr. Chris provides information and advice for home care, but also offers fluoride treatments, sealants, and cavity detection using advanced

technology to stop problems before they start.

Early Detection

Catching potential dental problems early can keep them from becoming bigger issues in the future. Pediatric dentists are skilled in identifying issues like malocclusion (bad bite), jaw irregularities, and tongue and lip ties, ensuring your child gets the necessary treatment.

Treatment

In addition to preventive treatments, Dr. Chris treats common childhood dental issues, from cavities to dental trauma.

What Is a Dental Home?

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that children have a dental home to ensure that care is consistent, comprehensive, and centered on their needs. A dental home is an established relationship with a pediatric dentist. It is recommended that parents establish a dental home by the time their child is 12 months old in order



to build a foundation of good dental health.

Newtown Dentistry is proud to be the dental home for hundreds of Bucks County families. Many of our patients visited us as children, and have returned with their own families. With services for adults and children (including orthodontics) under one roof, we make it easy for the whole family to get the high-quality care they need for healthy smiles.

“Fantastic! They made my 2.5-year-old feel so comfortable, the waiting room is **PERFECT** for a family. Very knowledgeable and made my daughter’s first dentist visit very fun for her! Such a great experience!”

—Jess T.



The Basics of Kids Dental Care: A Guide for Parents

The good news about kids dental care is that it's not complicated. Starting early and remaining consistent will help your kids develop the habits they need for a lifetime of oral health.

To keep your kids' teeth healthy, follow this checklist.

1. Brushing

As soon as your baby has a tooth, it's

time to start brushing. Before then, starting around three months old, keep their gums clean by wiping them with a soft, damp cloth or gauze pad.

Children should be supervised while brushing until they learn to spit out toothpaste afterwards. Use a toothbrush specifically made for children, one with small, soft bristles and an easy-grip handle. Always use

a small amount of toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice for children under three, a pea-sized amount for older children).

Teeth should be brushed at least twice a day.

2. Flossing

Flossing should begin as soon as two teeth touch. Floss at least once a day. Older children can learn to floss using pre-strung flossers.

3. Dental Checkups

Make your child's first dental appointment as soon as their first tooth appears, or by their first birthday. Children should then see

the dentist at least twice a year for a checkup and cleaning.

4. Nutrition

Limiting sugary snacks and drinks is important to your child's overall well-being and oral health. Sugar — especially from sticky foods like candy — lingers on the surface of the teeth and contributes to the development of cavities. Treats are best in moderation, followed by tooth brushing and flossing.

5. Orthodontics

All children should have an orthodontic consultation by age 7 to detect any problems that need treatment.



Kids Dental Care: The First Year

Did you know that babies are born with a full set of 20 teeth hidden beneath their gums? The first tooth usually appears when they're 6-10 months old, but some children get their first tooth earlier or later. All of your child's baby teeth should appear by age three.

Baby teeth serve an important purpose. They help your little one learn to speak and eat. Unfortunately they're also vulnerable to tooth decay. That's why it is so important to start an oral hygiene routine

even before the first tooth appears. Cleaning your baby's gums, brushing their teeth, and seeing the dentist prevent problems that can cause pain, discomfort, and further dental issues.

What to Expect During Your Child's First Dental Visit

Dr. Chris performs a thorough exam during your baby's first dental visit. However, you can expect a significant portion of the visit to include a conversation about dental

care and how you can get your child on track to healthy teeth. This includes discussing:

- **Oral Hygiene**

- how bacteria works in the mouth
- establishing bedtime routines
- brushing techniques
- proper amount of toothpaste
- when to introduce flossing

- **Diet**

- breast/bottle feeding
- using sippy cups
- reviewing how cavities occur

- **Fluoride exposure**

- sources of fluoride and answering
- questions about it

- **Habits**

- pacifier use
- thumb/finger sucking

- **Injury prevention**

- **Developmental milestones and what to expect**

Parents are encouraged to ask questions during any visit to Newtown Dentistry. We strive to be your partner and work with you for the healthiest, brightest smiles possible.

I took my son here for the first time today and I can't say enough great things about this office and its [team]. **It was truly one of the best experiences I've ever had.** They make you feel like part of their family the moment you walk in and until you leave their door. My son and I were walking out to our car after his appointment and he said hey mom that was a lot of fun! You don't hear that much after a visit to the dentist.

—Gabrielle D.



The Most Common Myths About Kids Dental Care

Dr. Chris and her team hear a lot of myths and misconceptions when it comes to dental care, especially for very young children. Not only are they untrue, but they may even be harmful to your child's health. Check out some of the most common myths we hear — and learn the truth.

“My child doesn't have all their teeth yet. They don't need to see a dentist!”

Many parents put off making a dental appointment until all of their child's baby teeth have appeared.

Unfortunately, waiting until your little one is two or three years old (or later) increases the risk of issues like cavities going undetected. Seeing the dentist as soon as the first tooth appears — or within the first year — ensures that your child's teeth are healthy, and helps them become more comfortable (and even excited!) with seeing the dentist.

“Fluoride is dangerous.”

In recent years, various studies have suggested that fluoride is dangerous to young children, and parents should limit exposure to the tooth-building mineral. Like most things, excessive fluoride can potentially cause health issues. But the amount contained in toothpaste, rinses, and dental treatments is safe and proven to reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay in young children by strengthening the tooth enamel. It prevents the acids created by oral bacteria from demineralizing the enamel and leaving it vulnerable to decay.

“Baby teeth will fall out anyway. Cavities are no big deal.”

While it's true that baby teeth do fall out to be replaced by permanent teeth, that doesn't mean that dental care and cavity prevention aren't important.

Baby teeth help guide jaw development and maintain space for adult teeth. If they decay and fall out too soon, it can affect development

and lead to other problems in the future.

Baby teeth also protect the adult teeth. Decay can lead to an infection that is not only painful, but can damage the permanent teeth below. Tooth decay is also associated with poor sleep, missed school days, and poor academic performance, so taking care of baby teeth and seeing the dentist is critical to your child's overall well-being.

“Going to bed with a bottle won't hurt anything.”

Whether it's a bottle at night or a sippy cup all day, letting your little one always have milk or juice nearby is one of the leading causes of tooth decay. When children drink throughout the day or night, sugars and bacteria levels in the mouth remain elevated, increasing the risk of tooth decay.

Ideally, drinks should be left to meal and snack times. Limiting sugary drinks, including juice, sports drinks, and soda, and offering water instead can also protect your child's teeth.

“Thumb-sucking means my baby will need braces.”

Non-nutritive sucking on the fingers, thumb, or pacifier is a normal part of development. Rooting and sucking are natural reflexes, and many babies do them to soothe themselves or fall asleep. Most children stop on their own by age three. It’s usually not a concern until your child’s permanent teeth come in, at which point it can potentially affect the palate (roof of the mouth) or bite.

If you are concerned about your child’s sucking habit, talk to the dentist about it. Dr. Chris can provide some tips to help them break the habit if necessary.



What Makes Newtown Dentistry Different

Newtown Dentistry is a different kind of dentist for kids. Although expert, high-quality care is the priority, we also want our patients to have fun when they come to see Dr. Chris!

From the moment you walk through the doors, it's easy to see that you aren't at your average dental

practice. Kids love playing on the large indoor treehouse (complete with slide!) before their visits, learning how to take care of their teeth with some friendly puppets, and choosing a special prize at the end of the visit.



Parents love Newtown Dentistry for the advanced care we offer. We are committed to using the latest dental technology, including:

- **Low-Radiation X-rays**
- **3D Panorex Dental Imaging**
- **Silver Diamine Fluoride Treatment**
- **SOPROLIFE Cavity Detection Camera**
- **Nitrous Oxide (laughing gas)**
- **Dental Sealants**
- **LightScalpel CO2 Laser Tongue and Lip Tie Release**

We also make it easy and convenient to make appointments for the whole family — including orthodontic visits — under one roof. You can rest assured that your family’s dental care won’t break the bank. In addition to handling insurance claims, we offer interest-free financing and an in-house savings program to ensure your kids get the care they need.

Dr. Chris and [her team] are always fantastic. My daughter has some dental anxiety and **it goes away the second she hops into the chair.** Dental visits are comfortable and she always leaves with a smile!

— Robert E.



Make an Appointment Today

If it's time for your little one's first dental appointment, or you are searching for a new dental home for your family, [request an appointment](#) at Newtown Dentistry. We look forward to welcoming you!

[Request Appointment](#)