

First tooth, first visit, zero cavities: a practical approach to the infant oral health visit

Précis

Get it done in year one! A practical approach to an infant oral health visit is presented to encourage commencement of oral healthcare at this important age.

Abstract

The IDA adopted a formal policy on children's oral health in 2011. There is increasing evidence to support early dental visits for children. The background to the infant oral health visit is discussed and a systematic approach to the practicalities of the visit is offered. General dental practitioners are encouraged to offer the first oral health visit before the first birthday, and this paper aims to give them practical advice concerning this visit. The feature is accompanied by a companion paper that reviews the literature pertaining to the topic, and serves to complement the recent clinical feature published in the *Journal of the Irish Dental Association*.

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Dr Kirsten FitzGerald

BDentSc MS (Texas) FFD (RCSI)
Consultant Paediatric Dental Surgeon,
Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, and
Dublin Dental University Hospital

Dr Eleanor McGovern

BDS MFD MDentCh (Paediatric Dentistry)
Consultant Paediatric Dental Surgeon,
The Children's University Hospital, Temple Street

Corresponding author:

Dr Kirsten FitzGerald, Dental Department, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin
E: kirsten.fitzgerald@olchc.ie T: 01-409 6549

Dr Aifric Ní Chaollaí

BA BDentSc MDentSc (Leeds) MPaedDent (RCPSG)
Paediatric Dentist at Dental Care Ireland, Cabinteely
and the Northbrook Clinic, Ranelagh

Dr Brett Duane

BDS MAM (Health) MPH PHD
Associate Professor, Dental Public Health,
Dublin Dental University Hospital



This link <http://bit.ly/2iNCSII> contains four demonstration videos on examining and brushing infants' and toddlers' teeth, which were made with the support of UCD and the Genetics Department at Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin.

First tooth, first visit, zero cavities: a review of the evidence as it applies to Ireland

Précis

Appropriate preventive dental advice and care should commence early in life. In this narrative review, an infant oral health visit is recommended and the reasons for this advice are discussed.

Abstract

Statement of the problem: There is increasing evidence that the first oral health visit should occur before 12 months of age. Anecdotally, most children in Ireland are not seen at an optimal age.

Purpose of the study: To review the benefits, on both an individual and population basis, of children receiving oral healthcare before 12 months of age, and to apply the appropriate available evidence to the current oral health landscape in Ireland.

Results: From an individual perspective, there is published evidence of the benefits of infants attending a dentist before the age of 12 months. These benefits include the opportunity to risk assess the child, provide tailored oral health education and institute preventive care. From an oral health promotion perspective, there are additional benefits of providing population level programmes for children at an early age.

Conclusions: Introduction of the first dental visit by 12 months of age should be firmly on the health agenda here in Ireland.

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Dr Brett Duane

BDS MAM (Health) MPH PHD
Associate Professor, Dental Public Health,
Dublin Dental University Hospital

Dr Eleanor McGovern

BDS MFD MDentCh (Paediatric Dentistry)
Consultant Paediatric Dental Surgeon,
The Children's University Hospital, Temple Street

Dr Aifric Ní Chaollaí

BA BDentSC MDentSc (Leeds) MPaedDent (RCPSG)
Paediatric Dentist at Dental Care Ireland, Cabinteely
and the Northbrook Clinic, Ranelagh

Dr Kirsten FitzGerald

BDentSc MS (Texas) FFD (RCSI)
Consultant Paediatric Dental Surgeon,
Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, and
Dublin Dental University Hospital

Corresponding author:

Dr Brett Duane Associate Professor, Dental Public Health, Dublin Dental University Hospital
E: Brett.duane@dental.tcd.ie T: 083-804 3070