

Early Childhood Tooth Decay

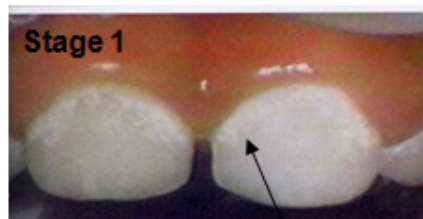
Early Childhood Tooth Decay (ECTD) are cavities found in children younger than 6 years of age usually found in the upper front teeth.

Even though your child's baby teeth are temporary, it is still important to take care of them

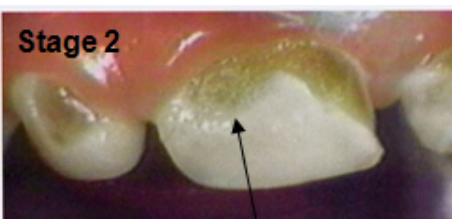
At birth, babies have very few germs in their mouth that cause cavities, **but ECTD can develop when:**

- Germs are introduced into a child's mouth by parents/caregivers by sharing utensils or licking soothers.
- Babies or young children are frequently exposed to liquids that contain sugar, for example when falling asleep while feeding. During the feeding, the sugar in liquids combines with germs in the mouth producing an acid that damages the tooth's hard outer layer (enamel) which leads to cavities.

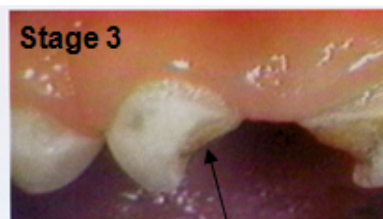
If you see white or brown spots on your baby's teeth, take your child to the dentist.



Chalky, white area below the gum line of the top front teeth



Quickly turns into brown decay



If left alone, teeth begin to breakdown, which can lead to infection

Prevent ECTD:

- Lift your baby's top lip to check for cavities at least once a month.
- Wipe your baby's gums with a clean washcloth in the morning, at night and after feeding.
- If your baby falls asleep while feeding, gently remove the nipple before placing your baby to sleep.
- If your baby sleeps with a bottle, only use water.
- As soon as your baby's teeth appear, brush them at least twice a day with a small, soft toothbrush with only tap water (no toothpaste).
- Avoid sharing utensils with your baby or putting their soother in your mouth.
- Offer tap water to your child between meals.
- Visit a dentist with your baby by age one.

For more information talk to your dentist or dental hygienist or call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744.