

Assessing Risk: *Dental Health*

When a child or adolescent's medical condition may complicate dental care, communicate necessary medical advice to his or her dentist and/or orthodontist on an ongoing basis.

Earlier dental referral is recommended for infants with the following conditions or risk factors:

- decay
- white spot lesions on teeth
- mother has active decay
- bottle feeding in bed
- children without systemic fluoride
- older siblings with a history of Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Earlier and/or more frequent dental referral is recommended for children and adolescents with the following risk factors for dental disease:

- anatomical susceptibility to caries due to deep pits or decalcification of tooth enamel
- gastric reflux or frequent vomiting from illness or eating disorder
- genetic predisposition to periodontal disease (e.g., Down or Papillon Lefevre Syndrome)
- reduced saliva flow from medication or irradiation
- medications or conditions with oral effects (e.g., Dilantin, oral contraceptives, pregnancy)
- frequent intake of sugared medications
- history of caries
- poor family oral health (especially caries) and/or high level of oral Strep mutans in parents or siblings
- uses bottle in bed or "at will" when awake
- inadequate fluoride intake (not on fluoridated water and not supplemented despite assurance that water source does not have naturally high levels of fluoride)
- orthodontic appliances
- inadequate oral hygiene
- limited access to dental care
- frequent snacking on high carbohydrate fluids and foods
- tobacco use

Children and adolescents with the following conditions may not be at increased risk for dental disease, but these and similar conditions may enhance the complexity or risk of dental treatment. Early and frequent consultation between medical and dental care providers and careful adherence to preventive dental regimens is essential in these situations:

- cleft lip or palate
- bleeding disorders
- immune suppression (e.g., long-term corticosteroid use, transplants, HIV/AIDS, neoplastic diseases, radiation, chemotherapy)
- disorders requiring long term antibiotics or other medications
- renal, liver or significant cardiovascular disease
- seizure disorders
- diabetes
- behavior disorders
- developmental and certain physical disabilities

Source:

Vermont Department of Health, 1999