

## Stages of Early Childhood Tooth Decay



**Early Decay**



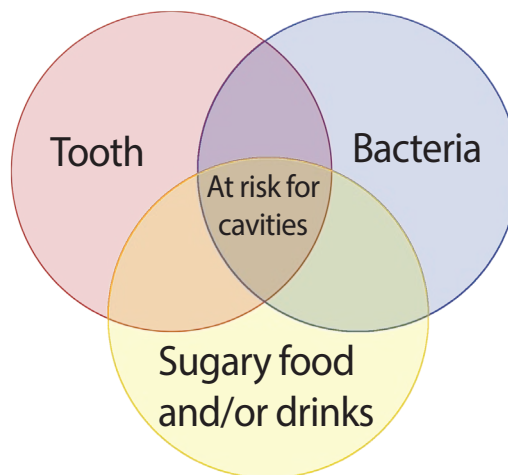
**Moderate Decay**



**Advanced Decay**

### Is my child at risk?

Tooth decay occurs when bacteria in the mouth uses the sugars in foods that you eat to produce acids which dissolve the tooth. Bacteria produce acids from sugary food on the tooth, especially tooth surfaces that are difficult to clean. The acid dissolves the tooth forming a cavity on the tooth.



**Do you think your child  
is at risk for early childhood  
tooth decay?**

Check out how many of the factors  
listed inside apply to you.

### Dental Public Health Clinics

Charlottetown  
Dental Clinic  
Sherwood Business Centre  
161 St. Peter's Road  
Charlottetown  
368-4918

Summerside  
Dental Clinic  
Health Centre  
205 Linden Ave.  
Summerside  
888-8145

# Early Childhood Tooth Decay

*A severe form of  
tooth decay in children  
that affects many teeth*



Dental Programs  
*Public Health and Children's  
Developmental Services*  
Community Health

**Health PEI**  
One Island Health System

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## Tooth Decay

Tooth decay (cavity) is the most common chronic disease in children:

- about 5 times as common as asthma
- about 7 times as common as hay fever.<sup>1</sup>

Data from the annual school screening in Prince Edward Island show that:

- Two of every five children have experienced tooth decay by the time they enter kindergarten.
- Half of the children in Grade 1 have experienced tooth decay.



Normal Baby Teeth

## Early Childhood Tooth Decay

Tooth decay affects a child's development and overall health and well being. Children who are affected:

- may cry a lot because they have severe toothache;
- are unable to eat and/or sleep;
- lose weight;
- may have a swollen face; and
- may fail to thrive.

Affected child may have to be treated in the operating room under general anesthesia.

<sup>1</sup>Surgeon General's Perspectives - Public Health Reports, 2010

## What is Early Childhood Caries (or tooth decay)?

Early childhood tooth decay is a severe and rapid decay of many teeth. It affects children under the age of six years. Affected children have decay in many teeth, especially in the smooth surfaces of their primary (baby) teeth — the front upper baby teeth.



Early Childhood Tooth Decay



Treatment of early childhood tooth decay can be stressful for the child and the family.

Treatment can involve extractions, fillings, crowning of teeth that have lost a lot of tooth material.

These treatments are carried out under general anesthesia (child put to sleep) in a hospital.

Treatment is very expensive.

## The more of these that apply to you, the more likely it is that your child will develop early childhood tooth decay

Your child is more likely to have early childhood tooth decay if:

- You put your child to bed with a bottle containing anything other than water.
- You coat your child's pacifier with something sweet.
- You don't brush your child's teeth every day with a toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- Your child does not have a regular source of dental care.
- You give your child more than 3 sugar-containing snacks or beverages between meals per day.
- Your child does not receive topical fluoride from a health professional.
- Your child does not receive optimal fluoride—your child lives in a community that does not have adequate level of fluoride in its water.
- You or another primary caregiver has untreated tooth decay.
- You don't have dental insurance

Adapted from the American Association of Pediatric Dentistry's *Guideline on Caries Risk Assessment*