BUILDING HEALTHY TEETH:

Healthy baby teeth are important to your child's growth and development. Baby teeth are meant to last. Many baby teeth do not fall out until your child is 10-12 years old. Take care of baby teeth. Tooth decay can start as soon as teeth come in. If you start good habits early, tooth decay can be prevented.

Before your child gets teeth:

- As a parent, you should get your mouth in as good shape as possible. Tooth decay bacteria spreads from you to your child. Make sure your teeth are healthy

- Ensure your baby unlatches from breast or bottle when they fall asleep

- Clean inside your baby's mouth every day with a damp washcloth

As soon as teeth come in:

- Use a small, soft toothbrush to clean the teeth twice a day now

- Brush with a small amount of toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice) to keep the teeth strong

- Teach your child to drink from a cup as soon as they can sit up

Around your child's first birthday:

- It is time for a dental visit. Tooth decay can be stopped if treated early. Your dentist will talk about daily care, teething, fluoride, and eating habits. They will let you know how often they would like to see your child

- Keep brushing with toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste twice a day

- Teeth that touch should be flossed once a day

- Offer water between meals

- Your child should no longer be using a bottle

3 years and beyond:

- Your child should have all their baby teeth now

- Offer small healthy snacks at set times and water between meals. Frequent eating and drinking can lead to tooth decay

- Keep up the good work brushing for your child – your child won't be able to do a good job brushing his teeth until he is around 8 years old

- Brush with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day now

- Visit the dentist regularly

Congratulations! You have built some healthy dental habits. Regular dental visits; good daily oral care; and healthy eating will help keep your child's baby teeth in good shape. Between the ages of 6 and 12 years, your child has both baby and adult teeth in their mouth. Healthy baby teeth lead to healthy adult teeth.

When to ask questions:

- Parent has tooth decay

- Child sips and snacks often during the day

- Child is not cooperative with daily oral care

- Child has dull white, yellow or brown areas on the teeth

Dental TIP

- *Brush and floss in front of your child to set a good example*

- *Position yourself behind your child to brush their teeth*

Who do you ask for help?

- Your family dentist

- A public health dental hygienist (604-233-3150)

Where to get help:

- Information on Healthy Kids Benefit (government support for the cost of children's dentistry) @ 1-866-866-0800

- "Find A Dentist " at www.bcdental.org

- Free oral screening and preventive services for children 0-6 who do not have a dentist @ Richmond Public Health (604) 233-3150