The Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, Third Edition features 10 health promotion themes. These state-of-the-art discussions focus on topics of key importance to families and health care professionals in their common mission to promote the health and well-being of children from birth through adolescence. These 10 themes are also woven into the 31 health supervision visits.

What you’ll find in the “Promoting Oral Health” chapter

Overview: Setting the stage
Oral health is critically important to the overall health and well-being of children and adolescents. It covers a range of health promotion and disease prevention concerns, including dental caries (a preventable and transmissible infectious disease that is the most common chronic disease in children); periodontal health; proper development and alignment of facial bones, jaws, and teeth; oral diseases and conditions; and trauma or injury to the mouth and teeth. Oral health is an important and continuing health supervision issue for the health care professional.

In-depth: Exploring the topic
The introductory section of this chapter discusses the importance of a dental home, the use of supplemental fluoride, and the oral health of children and youth with special health care needs.

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Infancy: Birth to 11 Months
- Oral hygiene and feeding practices that promote oral health
- Oral health risk assessment

Early Childhood: 1 to 4 Years
- Oral hygiene, fluoride, and feeding practices that promote oral health
- Oral health risk assessment
- Other oral health issues, such as pacifier use, and finger or thumb sucking

Middle Childhood: 5 to 10 Years
- Oral hygiene, fluoride, and nutrition practices that promote oral health
- Other oral health issues, such as finger or other sucking habits, tobacco use, and traumatic injury to the mouth

Adolescence: 11 to 21 Years
- Oral hygiene, fluoride, and nutrition practices that promote oral health
- Other oral health issues, including periodontal conditions, and traumatic injury to the mouth
How the theme of “Promoting Oral Health” fits into Bright Futures visits

Each Bright Futures health supervision visit is structured around five priority topics that help focus the health care professional’s guidance to parents and children. Some priorities are unique to a particular visit; others are featured often and their components evolve in concert with the child’s development.

These examples of priorities, taken from selected visits, show how Bright Futures helps health care professionals talk to families about promoting oral health during each developmental stage:

- **Infancy: 6 Month Visit**
  - Oral health, including supplemental fluoride, oral hygiene and using a soft toothbrush, and avoiding the use of a bottle in bed

- **Early Childhood: 15 Month Visit**
  - Healthy teeth, with guidance focused on daily brushing, transmission of caries-promoting bacteria, and bottle usage

- **Middle Childhood: 5 and 6 Year Visits**
  - Oral health, including regular visits with dentist, daily brushing and flossing, and adequate fluoride

- **Late Adolescence: 18 to 21 Year Visits**
  - Physical growth and development, including physical and oral health, body image, healthy eating, and physical activity

Additional Resources on Promoting Oral Health

- American Academy of Pediatrics [aap.org](http://aap.org)
- HealthyChildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)
- Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration [mchb.hrsa.gov](http://mchb.hrsa.gov)
- Family Voices IMPACT on Health & Wellness for Families [fv.impact.org](http://fv.impact.org)
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Children’s Oral Health [aap.org/commpeds/dochs/oralhealth](http://aap.org/commpeds/dochs/oralhealth)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [cdc.gov/oralhealth](http://cdc.gov/oralhealth)

**Bright Futures Health Promotion Themes**

- Family Support
- Child Development
- Mental Health
- Healthy Weight
- Healthy Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Oral Health
- Safety and Injury Prevention
- Community Relationships and Resources
- Healthy Sexual Development and Sexuality

**Bright Futures is a national health care promotion and disease prevention initiative that uses a developmentally-based approach to address children’s health needs in the context of family and community.**

**To learn more about Bright Futures, visit brightfutures.aap.org.**