

HARRISBURG, Pa., Feb. 13, 2020— Building an early, positive relationship with the dentist helps children develop healthy dental habits that last a lifetime, according to United Concordia Dental, a national dental solutions partner with a focus on oral and overall health.

"During National Children's Dental Health Month, we want parents to understand that a relationship with good oral and overall health begins with introducing their children to the dentist at an early age," said Quinn Dufurrena, D.D.S., J.D., chief dental officer for United Concordia. "The American Dental Association recommends that children visit a dentist soon after their first baby teeth appear, and no later than their first birthday."

The initial office visit is more about comfort than dental care. It allows children to become familiar with the dentist's chair and instruments, while their parents discuss the best ways to care for their teeth and gums. The dentist will typically do a quick exam to look for any developing problems.

One visit a year is plenty at that age, but after age 2, children should see the dentist every six months. Parents should regularly clean their gums, and then brush their teeth as soon as they come in. And they should take care to use the right toothpaste -- and the right amount.

"A very small amount of toothpaste is all you need for a young child, and the toothpaste should be fluoride-free," Dufurrena said. "Children can begin using toothpaste with fluoride around age 3, but parents should make sure they're not using too much, and that they don't swallow it."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend using a pea-sized amount of toothpaste for children ages 3 to 6. Parents should continue to brush their child's teeth twice a day with a child-size toothbrush, until they're comfortable that the child can brush on his or her own.

United Concordia offers a number of resources to help parents understand all of the things they need to know about managing their children's dental care.

For more information about how to help children learn good dental habits, visit [United Concordia](https://news.unitedconcordia.com/Visit-the-Dentist-Early).

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