

Dental Referral Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

1. The purpose of the dental screening of infants and toddlers is to classify them as likely or unlikely to have dental disease. Those who you believe are likely to have disease should be referred to a dentist for a definitive diagnosis and treatment as needed.
2. Patients should be referred if you detect anything that is not normal. Even if you are unsure.
3. Always refer for:
 - Dental caries (tooth decay) at all stages
 - Soft tissue pathology, such as dental abscesses or other infection
 - Pain of suspected dental origin
4. You might decide to refer a particular patient after the risk assessment because you determine the child to be at high risk for dental problems due to poor oral hygiene, defective enamel, frequent carbohydrate, medications, or special health care needs.
5. Indicate in the patient record the reason for the referral.
6. Helpful hints:
 - Compile a list of Medicaid dental providers in your area who will treat very young children. Pediatric dentists are most likely to provide this treatment, but they are in short supply in the state of Kansas.
 - For patients needing to be seen immediately (infection or severe decay) help the family member make the dental appointment. All caregivers should be informed of your findings and told to see their dentist regularly.
 - Determine at follow-up visits if a dental visit has taken place.

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