



National Center on
Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety



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Promoting Oral Health for Babies

Welcome to Resources to Make You Smile! This monthly newsletter features information and tools Head Start staff can use to help families promote good oral health. These tips help Head Start staff support families, expectant families, and children. The newsletter also includes a recipe for a healthy snack that children can make in a Head Start classroom or at home with their families.

Oral Health and Babies



Taking care of babies' oral health is important. Care should start before the first tooth comes in, around age 6 to 10 months. As soon as the first tooth comes into the mouth, a baby can develop tooth decay. Preventing tooth decay and other oral health problems starts by brushing a baby's teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day and checking their mouths for problems. Babies should visit the dentist by age 1 to identify problems, such as tooth decay, and help answer questions parents may have.

Resources for Staff

Review these [Brush Up on Oral Health](#) tip sheets to learn how to clean a babies mouth after feedings and how to educate parents about the best ways to care for their baby's mouth. The tip sheets include up-to-date practices and useful tips to promote good oral health for babies.

- [Promoting Oral Health for Babies](#)
- [Promoting the Age 1 Dental Visit](#)
- [Understanding Why Primary Teeth Are Important](#)

Refer to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentist (AAPD) [State Dental Periodicity Schedules](#) for guidelines regarding the types of professional dental services and the recommendations for scheduled intervals.

Resources for Parents

Share these [Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#) handouts with parents to explain why taking care of their babies' teeth helps promote overall health and development.

- [Taking Care of Your Baby's Oral Health](#)
- [Understanding Why Baby Teeth Are Important](#)
- [Visiting the Dentist by Age 1](#)

Show these [Sesame Street](#) videos to teach parents how to take care of their babies' teeth and help them understand the importance of brushing with fluoride toothpaste.

- [Brush with Elmo](#)
- [How Much Toothpaste?](#)
- [Starting Early](#)

Cook's Corner Recipe: Cheesy Red-nosed Reindeer

Ingredients

- 4 cheese slices
- 1 piece of red, yellow, or orange bell pepper
- 2 black olives
- 8 small pretzel twists

Directions

1. Cut the cheese into triangles that are $\frac{1}{4}$ - to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick.
2. Cut the olives into small pieces.
3. Cut the bell pepper into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch circles.
4. Put one corner of the cheese triangle into the bottom hole of the pretzel twist to make the first antler.
5. Put the other corner of the cheese triangle into the bottom hole of the second pretzel twist to make the second antler.



6. Add two black olive pieces onto the cheese to make the reindeer's eyes.
7. Add the bell pepper circle onto the cheese to make the reindeer's nose.

Makes 8 servings

Safety tip: To prevent injuries, an adult should slice ingredients.

Stay Connected!

Join [MyPeers](#) to connect with Head Start and early childhood colleagues around the country on this and other topics. Members of the **Health, Safety, and Wellness** community are currently networking, sharing, and learning from each other. Find it under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

Please share this issue with others who may be interested.

Did someone forward you this newsletter? [Subscribe](#) to stay up to date!

We Want to Hear from You!

Send your questions or comments to the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety at health@ecetta.info or (toll-free) 888-227-5125.

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