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# Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NATIONAL HEALTHY BABIES MONTH

October is **National Healthier Babies Month** and The Piedmont Regional Dental Clinic, wants to help ensure that more babies in the Piedmont region of Virginia are healthy. For that reason, on October 1st, the Piedmont Regional Dental Clinic will go purple and proclaim the goal of “**HEALTHY BABIES**” to remind us that every child deserves a healthy start. It is well known that dental health has a major impact on general health. Nearly 1 in 3 (or 4.5 million) children age 2-5 years old experience cavities, of which, almost 75% (or 3 million) go untreated. Severe, early, childhood caries (aka “baby bottle decay”, “bottle rot”, or “bottle mouth”) has severe consequences that can have a detrimental effect on the child’s ability to eat, sleep un-interrupted, concentrate in school, and perform normal daily activities. At the same time, caries in children is preventable! Help us celebrate Healthy Babies Month by getting the “word” out to our community. Below is a list of tips for keeping your child’s teeth healthy, as well as things that all mothers and soon to be mothers should know about your oral and general health, says Dr. Jeff, Clinical Director of Piedmont Regional Dental Clinic.

- Baby teeth matter! They are important for growth, speech, and becoming a healthy adult. Therefore...
  - a. Children should have their first dental visit by the age of 1.
  - b. You should never put your child to bed with a bottle of milk or juice. This may cause decay.
  - c. After each nighttime feeding, wipe your infant’s gums with a clean damp wash cloth.
  - d. Dipping your child’s pacifier in sugar or honey may cause cavities.
  - e. Ask your dentist about the importance of fluoride for your child’s teeth.
- Also, see your healthcare provider early for important prenatal care.
  - a. Ask your healthcare provider about the benefits of breastfeeding your infant.
  - b. Eat right, exercise and rest according to the doctor’s advice.
  - c. Take prenatal vitamins that include folic acid.

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- d. Get tobacco, drug- and alcohol-free (there is help out there for those who need it).
- e. Protect yourself and your baby- if you are being abused, get help.
- Finally, prior to and during pregnancy, it is important to maintain good oral hygiene and continue to see your dentist. Research has shown that gum disease in the mother can lead to pre-term delivery and low birth weight.
- Dr. Jeff says “If you are pregnant and experiencing pain, emergency dental work can be completed at any time, but is ideal during the 2nd trimester. During this time the baby has already undergone the important stages of development and it is often the most comfortable time for the mother. I encourage you to discuss the risks versus the benefits of dental treatment during pregnancy with your dentist” he also say’s “children should limit highly acidic, sugary drinks, such as juice, sodas, and sweet tea. By replacing these drinks with water and milk, kids will be less likely to get cavities and be on their way to better oral health, and even more so, better overall health. To learn more about healthy Babies Month visit our website at [www.vaprdc.org](http://www.vaprdc.org)

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