

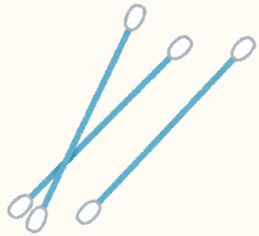
# Oral Care

Even infants who've yet to grow teeth and who may not take nutrition by mouth need to keep a clean mouth!

## Benefits

- Reduce risk for bacteria/infection to the lungs
- Prevent/reduce future cavities (yes, even before they have teeth!)

## Tools



A swab dipped in colostrum or breast milk is great for infants under 2 months



Textured teether brushes as your baby starts to seek bringing things to their mouth

# About the Author

Meet **Emily Covington, B.S.**



Emily is a speech-language pathology graduate student at Longwood University and a trainee in the Va-LEND program.

She has experience in the pediatric medical setting, including NICU (which inspired this project), and is passionate about infant and pediatric feeding and swallowing.

## References & More Info



CDC Infant Oral Health



Nationwide Children's Oral Stimulation

# Oral Care, Oral Stim, and the Mealttime Relationship

A brief program guide for caregivers of infants with non-oral means of nutrition



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Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Student

# Oral Stimulation

It's important to build oral skills, as well as expose infants to safe stimulus in their mouth, even if they receive most of their nutrition non-orally

## How?



Offer pacifier during tube feeds - you can add a few milk drops if it's approved by your medical providers!

Start presenting a dry spoon (or with small dips of milk, with medical provider approval) around 6 months of age!

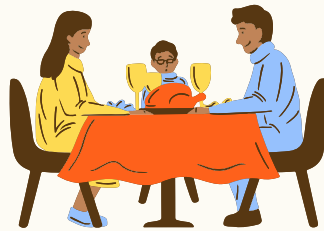


## Why?



- Associate the feeling of getting full with using their oral skills
- Build skills to prepare for future diet advancement

# The Mealtime Relationship



Whether you run a tube feed during dinner or another time, include your infant at the table. Sit together, talk about what's on the table, offer oral stimulation.

Spend time doing skin-to-skin with your infant, especially during tube feeds. This helps associate the contact and comfort with feeling full.



# The Team



## Speech Pathologist

SLPs specialize in feeding and swallowing. They are present in the inpatient and outpatient settings. They can support family feeding goals and oral skill development.

## Doctors

A team of doctors including: pediatricians, neonatologists, gastroenterologists, and more may support your families oral and non-oral feeding journey.



## Dietitians/Nutritionists

Registered dietitians play an important role on the team to ensure that your child is meeting nutritional needs as they grow in both size and skills.



## YOU!

You, your child, and your entire family are key stakeholders in your child's feeding journey. Your feeding goals should drive the plans for the rest of the team.

