



Importance of Preserving Deciduous Teeth in Childhood

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This question is in the minds of most parents in the community, why should they care for primary teeth while the longevity of these teeth is short and do not last for more than six to seven years? But the reality is other than that. These teeth are very important for many reasons, and the care and maintenance of them are also very essential.

Primary teeth erupt in the mouth about 7-6 months old, and children naturally have up to 20 teeth in their mouth till age 2 [1]. In many cases, children suffer from decayed teeth for various reasons, and this poses many challenges for the family and the child. One of the most important challenges for families is to decide on the treatment of these teeth concerning the child's young age. In this article, we will mention the most important aspects of the importance of the primary teeth, and parents' frequently asked questions, in this area.

Primary teeth functions

Primary teeth besides the three important tasks of chewing, talking, and beauty [2,3] that are seen in the permanent teeth have more important tasks. First of all, there are permanent teeth follicles under each of the primary teeth that maintain adequate space for tooth eruption [4,5].

Another point is that each of the permanent teeth uses the root of the primary teeth as a guide to reaching the main path of its eruption [6,7] and if it was not, there was a disturbance in the location and the path of the permanent teeth eruption.

Third, primary teeth are a useful tool for tooth brushing practices, keeping good oral hygiene, and earning the ability to maintain the health of permanent teeth. Also, the loss of these teeth has irreparable mental harm for the child, especially during the period of schooling.

A large part of the crowding and disorientation of permanent teeth occurs due to the early loss of primary teeth [3,8-10]. Hence, it can be said that the health of permanent teeth depends on maintaining the health of the primary teeth. Therefore, care that is essential for permanent teeth, such as timely and accurate brushing, the use of dental floss as well as repeated and regular periodic examinations, should be done more carefully for primary teeth [11]. Hence, as long as possible, parents should not allow children's teeth to be decayed, and if so, their primary teeth need to be treated for the first time opportunity.

Children with a beautiful smile

One of the most important reasons for the importance of primary teeth that may have been the least attention is their role in the beauty of the dental appearance of children. Dental caries or their darkening by various drugs (such as an iron drop) will harm the beauty of the children, and the child will be embarrassed by his appearance, and as a result, would lose his self-esteem [11,12]. Children due to a persistent toothache, severe caries, and loss of healthy tissue of teeth, can be exposed to physical problems, growth disorders, and sometimes malnutrition [13]. Having healthy teeth, give children the ability to have adequate nutrition in one of the most important stages of growth.

A guide to the correct eruption of permanent teeth

When the primary teeth erupt in the mouth, the permanent teeth buds are formed underneath them. In fact, these healthy teeth keep the space required for their permanent teeth spaces, so that their permanent teeth will erupt promptly and in their proper place. If a tooth is pulled out earlier than its proper time, the posterior teeth will move forward and occupy the extracted spaces [13].

As a result, when the permanent tooth reaches the time of the eruption due to lack of sufficient space, it will erupt in a displaced position; or remains impacted and will cause teeth misalignment resulting in orthodontic problems.

The posterior tooth will move slightly to the front to occupy the anterior tooth space even if the caries are interproximal and some of the structure of the teeth has been destroyed. Hence, even with a small carious lesion, the teeth should be restored quickly and preserved. The extraction of a decayed tooth that can be maintained is contraindicated.

Healthy teeth and beautiful speaking

Children who lose their teeth because of dental decays, especially their anterior teeth, cannot speak well and they have a problem with the pronunciation of most words. Primary anterior teeth have a significant impact on how children speak and pronounce some words. With the loss of these teeth, the way they speak looks funny which is accompanied by a whistling sound. This makes them being mocked by their classmates, playmates, friends, peers, and even siblings, which ultimately leads them to isolate themselves from their surroundings [11,13]. In other words, because of the fear of mocking, they are not involved in group activities at all; at home, they become childish and disobedient or even out of temper.

Oral care for primary teeth

Breast milk is a rich source of lactose [14,15] that can help calcium absorption; it is very effective in bone density, and tooth strength in children [16]. Sodium, Potassium, Phosphate, Protein,

Iron, types of vitamins, and Antibodies are other useful ingredients that are seen in breastfeeding [14,15]. But keep in mind that breast milk with all its benefits and advantages, due to having fermented lactose sugar, regarding a study; it is cariogenic if it has remained on the tooth surfaces [17,18]. Therefore, it is recommended for all mothers who feed their children with breastfeeding, let them drink water after that.

These teeth need care from the time of the eruption. They must be cleaned to reduce dental decays. For children under 2 years of age, there is no possibility to perform routine brushing techniques. Teeth in children under 2 years of age should be cleaned with a cleaning pad or wet cloth, or even using a special toothbrush called Finger toothbrush which has soft bristles to clean the baby's teeth.

Longevity of primary teeth

The central teeth naturally get loose around the ages of 6 to 7, and the posterior teeth and canines are present in the mouth until the age of 10 to 12 [1]. Usually, with the falling off every tooth, the permanent tooth is replaced by a short interval of time. Except for the first permanent molars, they will erupt about the age of 6 to 7 [1].

The necessity for primary teeth treatment

The primary teeth will indeed exist for a limited period in the mouth but if there are caries and the treatment is not performed, serious and irreparable complications may be introduced to the child due to teeth loss. Some of these are:

- **Endangering oral health and well being:** Tooth loss is directly associated with deteriorating diet and compromised nutrition [19]. In children, tooth loss is one of the most common consequences of oral disease which may lead to problems with chewing; swallowing, speaking, and also can disrupt sleep and their productivity [20]. Dental conditions in childhood can restrict children's participation in schooling and education through days lost to illness. Oral health is fundamental to children's general health; hence, dental diseases can negatively impact the general quality of life, affecting not only physical wellbeing but also psychological and social wellbeing.

- **The decrease in chewing ability:** In the event of caries or loss of teeth, the ability to chew and the desire to use various foods is reduced in children. So that the child refuses to eat some food even though there is no sign of any problem; and sometimes parents consider it as anorexia of the child. While in many cases, by eliminating the main cause of pain and tooth decay, the problem will be controlled. Obviously, in the event of problems with feeding, there are several complications such as growth disorders [21,22], constipation, tiredness, bad temper, and many other disorders that can occur in the kid.
- **Space maintenance for permanent teeth:** Primary teeth will be used as a guide for permanent teeth eruption [23], so if the primary teeth are lost earlier than the eruption time, It will result in the loss of space that is required for the permanent teeth eruption in most cases. On the other hand, complicated orthodontic treatments will be needed to correct this condition in future. As a result of early primary teeth loss, we may see the tooth impaction, crowdedness, or even tilting of the tooth due to the lack of space [24].
- **The beauty of the teeth:** The results of various studies show that the decay of the teeth and the dark appearance of their teeth may play an important role in the child's self-confidence and social interactions [25]. Even if he does not express this situation, the appearance of the teeth makes him be embarrassed. He may avoid laughing; or even more, his social relations may be disrupting.
- **Creating bad breath:** In the event of multiple decayed cavities, the accumulation of food between the teeth increases, and the food particles will become degenerated over time. Noteworthy, the inflammation in the gums and infection of the teeth will result in a child's bad breath.
- **The effect of primary teeth caries on the permanent teeth:** In the event of decays, inflammations, and infections of the primary teeth, the infection can spread to the buds of the permanent teeth and cause disruption of the develop-

mental growth of the permanent teeth [26]. Furthermore, the presence of caries in the teeth will increase the microorganisms of the decay factor including *Streptococcus mutans* and increases the high rate of incidence of caries in other teeth in the mouth.

Summary

There is a common misconception among the general public. Most parents believe the primary teeth are temporary, and they will eventually get loose and would fall, so, if they develop caries, pain, or abscesses, they do not need to be kept through the treatment; they should be extracted. In other words, it is believed that primary teeth are not very important due to their short longevity of life, and there is no need to take care of them. But the reality is other than that.

Contrary to this notion, these teeth are very important for many different reasons. Primary teeth play an important role in chewing food, gaining the skills of speaking, and having a beautiful face and a child's confidence.

Also, these teeth act as a natural space maintainer for permanent teeth which means that their presence will help the permanent teeth to erupt at the right time and in the right place. Extracting or early teeth loss can shorten the length of the jaw and thus causes teeth crowding a few years later. That's where we should talk about the need for a costly orthodontic treatment in the future. Therefore, we strongly recommend parents could prevent dental caries to preserve primary teeth by promoting oral hygiene in children.

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