

# Holistic Pediatric Dentistry

Childhood, when permanent (“adult”) teeth began to grow, is the best time to [teach youngsters good oral hygiene habits](#) and how to make wise nutritional choices. By learning how to prevent compromising the enamel, the hard substance that covers teeth, children can minimize and perhaps prevent the dental problems that plague many adults.



To this day, there is disagreement in the dental community about the precise cause of tooth decay. The most widely accepted theory is that decay is a local phenomenon (contained to the area of the mouth), caused when mouth bacteria consume sugar and excrete acid, which begins to decay enamel. Some studies have

demonstrated that certain foods, medical conditions, and bacteria can initiate decay; other studies assert that, although those factors may start the decay process, they do not contribute the formation of cavities.

Others consider tooth decay to be the result of systemic disease—conditions that originate elsewhere in the body but have an end result of causing decay in teeth. If this theory is correct, then causal factors, such as dietary choices, are equally as important as good oral hygiene to prevent decay. A qualified dentist’s systemic assessment can strike the right balance of hygiene, diet, and professional dental care, to prevent a child’s susceptibility to improper mineralization (hypomineralization) and decay.

[Pediatric tooth decay](#) is on the rise. Some research suggests

that systemic causes—including radiation exposure, hormonal abnormalities, and foreign proteins in food—are to blame. Hypomineralization, caused mainly by a diet inadequate in minerals, increases a child's susceptibility to decay. The systemic theory of decay suggests that other factors become relevant only after hypomineralization has begun.

## **Tooth decay in children falls into distinct categories:**

- Baby teeth versus adult teeth
- Anterior (front) vs. posterior (back) tooth patterns
- Contra-lateral tooth patterns
- Decay clustering
- Post-eruption susceptibility

Poor jaw development in children is generally caused not by genetics but by poor diet, mineral imbalances, interrupted regulation of jaw growth, and myofunctional problems. Breastfeeding may improve a baby's jaw growth and development; however, mother's milk that is insufficiently nutritious may be factors in systemic problems in that contribute to tooth and jaw problems later in childhood.

A [pediatric dental wellness program](#) helps your child to learn the lessons of proper health maintenance and nutritional habits that prevent dental disease. You can bring your child for his or her first dental exam after all the baby teeth are in—generally, between ages three and five.

Our pediatric wellness program begins with a three-part, comprehensive exam that checks tooth diagnosis, jaw development diagnosis, and periodontal diagnosis.

- The tooth diagnosis assesses tooth development, tooth mineralization, and decay development.
- The jaw development diagnosis examines jaw development

and alignment of the teeth.

- The periodontal diagnosis is an examination for teen gingivitis.

Following the three-part exam, the dentist provides a dental nutrition analysis and a systemic assessment, which includes a dietary analysis, a nutritional status, an immune system analysis, a hormone analysis, and a blood test.

The purpose of pediatric wellness is to prevent [dental disease in children](#). Such dental afflictions occur in five stages:

- Stage I examines the underlying causes of a child's dental problems.
- Stage II looks for oral susceptibility to dental diseases in teeth, gums, and jaw.
- Stage III looks for the initial indicators of dental disease.
- Stage IV is the oral-systemic metastasis stage, when dental problems have progressed to a more serious level.
- Stage V is when systemic manifestations of dental disease occur, which may be either lymphatic or obstetric in nature.

[The Center for Systemic Dentistry](#) works to address pediatric dental problems at the earliest stages, remedying the problem and preventing further dental or systemic damage later in your child's life. Located in [Berkeley Heights, New Jersey](#), we are committed to being the state's leading dental practice that focuses on holistic, healing-focused dentistry. [Dr. Philip Memoli](#) and his staff are ready to repair the damage caused by childhood dental problems and ensure that our pediatric patients are committed to maintaining healthy teeth as they grow. Call us today at (908) 464-9144 or contact us via our [online contact form](#).

[Pediatric Dentistry Outline](#)

[Fact Sheet](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Pediatric Wellness Program](#)

[The Stages of Dental Disease](#)