

## Mother Knows Best?

Long-term use of sippy cups ó those spillproof tumblers for toddlers too old for a bottle but too young to manage regular cups ó can put a child's developing teeth at risk for decay.

The Journal of Dentistry for Children has published a study indicating that 29 percent of 186 children with baby bottle decay-like symptoms had been using sippy cups.

“While these findings are not surprising, the connection between baby-bottle tooth decay and sippy cups is very new, yet very logical,” says Dr. Cindi Sherwood, a Kansas dentist and spokeswoman for the Academy of General Dentistry.

A child using a sippy cup uses the same sucking action required in nursing, and during the process, the six upper front teeth are immersed in beverages, interfering with the neutralizing, cleansing and rinsing effect of saliva.

What's even worse, parents are filling the cups with sweetened fruit juices and other sugary drinks. Unsweetened juices, water and teas are best alternatives.

The American Academy of Pediatrics points out that fruit juices will promote tooth decay if a child is allowed to hold a bottle, cup or box of juice through the day.

“If left untreated, baby bottle tooth decay can result in pain and infection,” Sherwood says. “Severely decayed teeth may need to be extracted and could effect the development of permanent teeth, a child's speech and chewing.”

Source: AP