

## Considering Extraction for

# Primary Teeth

When primary teeth (also called baby teeth) don't fall out like they should, it's sometimes necessary to remove them, so the permanent teeth can come in correctly.

When everything is working right, the permanent teeth come in directly underneath the baby teeth. As the permanent teeth grow in, the roots of the baby teeth dissolve away, causing them to loosen and eventually fall out. However, there are some cases when this process is disrupted and treatment becomes necessary.



*Natural tooth loss*



*Permanent and baby teeth side by side*



*Space maintainer*

### When extraction may be necessary

A number of situations lead us to recommend that we remove primary teeth. Sometimes, permanent teeth don't come in directly under the baby teeth. As a result, the roots of the baby teeth don't dissolve as they should. In that case, we see permanent teeth and baby teeth side by side.

In other cases, severely crowded baby teeth may be extracted as part of long-term orthodontic treatment. Other times, the baby teeth become loose, but not loose enough to fall out on their own, or the child doesn't like to wiggle a tooth to help it come out. In these cases, we must remove the baby teeth.

We usually recommend restoring a baby tooth that has a cavity instead of extracting it. However, we may remove a decayed baby tooth when an x-ray shows that the permanent teeth are ready to come in.

We may also remove a baby tooth when it is so damaged that it must be removed, even if the permanent teeth are not ready to come in. In this case, space maintainers are used to hold the child's other teeth in their proper places, so the permanent teeth can come in properly.

### Diagnosis and treatment

To determine if an extraction is right for your child, we'll do a thorough examination, which usually includes x-rays. Removing a problem baby tooth can be the best choice for supporting the health and development of your child's permanent teeth.