

Baby teeth...

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He lay there in the exam chair, feet hanging off the end, a fluorescent light shining down, watching the Discovery Channel playing on the ceiling. We were at the dentist. It was an ordinary Monday for me, an extraordinary Monday for my oldest since he was getting to miss a half-day of school to get his teeth cleaned.

The hygienist and I chatted about fluoride treatments, brushing techniques and 12-year molars. She went about cleaning and checking and scraping and scaling, while I tried to figure out how much extra I pay our dentist for my child to be able to watch that television hanging from the ceiling.

Before I could mentally break the numbers down, she looked up from his teeth long enough to tell me something that kicked the wind out of me. She might as well have said, "Your three legged puppy just died" or "I love your shorts. My grandmother has a pair just like them" or "Are you pregnant?" In fact, I would rather have heard all of the above comments-even if I've never owned a three legged dog and I'm NOT pregnant-instead of this...

"Oh, look at that! You only have one more baby tooth left."

"Come again?" I questioned

Without looking up she replied, "Yep, Mom. Only one baby tooth left. He's a big boy now."

I know it doesn't seem like a big deal. But on this particular day, at that particular hour hearing that my little boy was one tooth shy of having a full set of adult teeth made me want to get into

the fetal position and cry. The time is moving too fast for me!

It was just yesterday I took him to the dentist for the first time. I can still see him climbing up into that big Dr. Seuss chair. Wearing denim overalls and a red shirt, he looked so tiny in that big chair. We prepared him all week so he wouldn't be scared. I don't remember thinking how brave he was when he sat completely still as a strange woman poked and prodded in his mouth. Although, after I took my youngest, "more cautious" child to the dentist for the first time I appreciated the aforementioned bravery.

And here we are today. One more baby tooth left and arm pit hair. It's just a matter of time before he's getting his learner's permit, graduating high school and headed to college. The tooth fairy may have to leave mommy a sedative when that last tooth is placed beneath the pillow.

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