

★ How and when to brush your child's teeth

Hints and Tips

Brush teeth twice a day

A toothbrushing routine should commence as soon as your child's first tooth appears. Brush all teeth for at least 2 minutes twice a day including last thing at night before bed. If you choose to use a mouth wash or mouth rinse it is advised you do so at a different time to when you brush your teeth.

Please note - even if your child joins in with a toothbrushing programme at their nursery setting or school it is still important that he/she also brushes their teeth at home twice a day.

Use fluoride toothpaste

Fluoride toothpaste helps to strengthen teeth. If your child is under the age of 3 years use a smear of toothpaste that contains 1000 parts per million (PPM) fluoride. If your child is aged 3 years and over use a pea sized amount of toothpaste that contains 1350 – 1500 parts per million (PPM) fluoride. Encourage your child not to swallow toothpaste during and after brushing.

Adult supervision

It is advised that children should be supervised and helped with toothbrushing until the age of 7 as they are not able to remove plaque effectively. To do this you may find it easier to stand or sit behind your child, cradling their chin in your hand so you can reach their top and bottom teeth more easily.

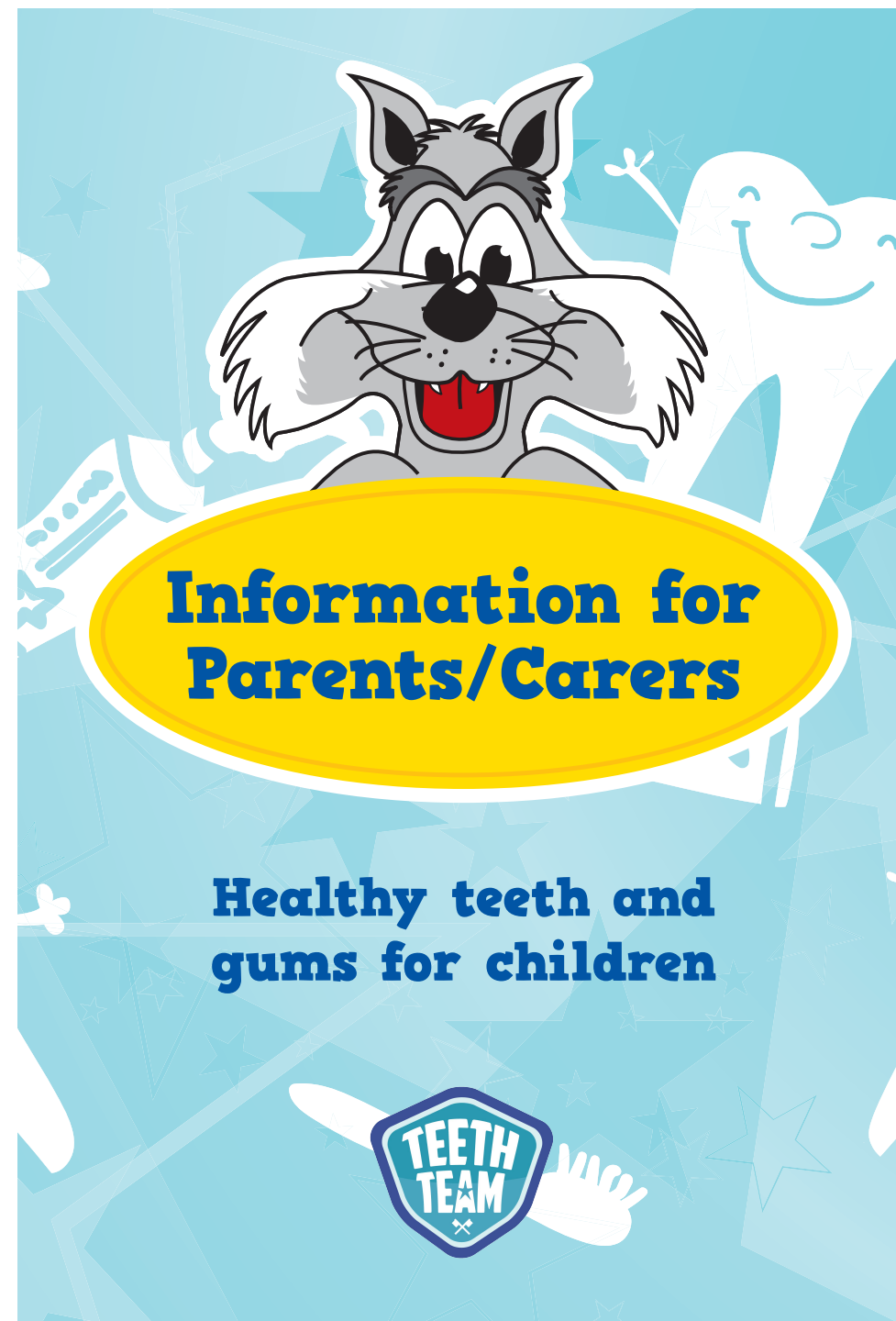
Toothbrushing actions

Tooth brushing should be carried out using small circular movements. Start at the back of the mouth by gently placing the bristles of the brush so that they are touching the teeth and the gums. Use a small circular motion to gently massage the gums and clean the teeth. Slowly work your way forwards, repeating on both sides, top and bottom. Make sure you brush all surfaces of your child's teeth, paying special attention to the biting surfaces where food can stick and get trapped.

Once tooth brushing has been completed there is no need to rinse, just spit out any remaining toothpaste.

Remember - spit don't rinse.

*It is appreciated that a good brushing technique can be quite difficult to master - just keep trying. One of the most important things to do is to get the fluoride onto your child's teeth and for them to accept that toothbrushing is part of their daily routine.



★ What is tooth decay?

Plaque

Plaque is a thin sticky coat that sticks to teeth which can contribute to tooth decay. The risk of tooth decay can be reduced by brushing teeth twice daily for at least 2 minutes and by limiting the amount of sugary foods and drinks we consume. The more often your child has sugary foods and drinks, the more likely they are to develop tooth decay.

Tooth decay

The basic process that causes dental decay (holes in the teeth) is often called an 'acid attack' due to the process, that when sugars enter the mouth they are rapidly absorbed by the (plaque) bacteria on the surface of the teeth. The sugar is converted by the bacteria into an acid as a waste product and this eventually breaks down the outer surface (enamel) of the tooth. Saliva helps repair this process by replacing the minerals lost from the tooth enamel. The severity of the attack can be reduced by decreasing the frequency and the amount of consumption of sugars.

★ Tooth decay is preventable

Find out below how you can help your child keep tooth decay at bay

Bottle to cup

From 4 months of age children should be introduced to drinking from a cup. Feeding from a bottle should be discouraged once a child reaches 12 months of age. Remember giving drinks other than water or milk may seriously damage your child's teeth.

Limit sugary snacks and drinks

If you choose to give your child sugary snacks and drinks try to keep them to meal times only. Eating sugar too often can cause tooth decay.

Choose healthy snacks and drinks

In between meals choose healthy snacks and drinks.

Sugar awareness

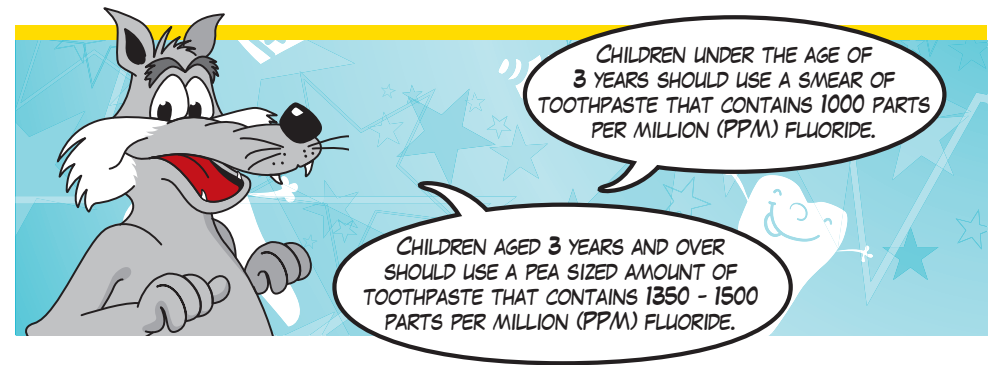
When you offer your child a snack or drink think about its sugar content. Try checking the list of ingredients. Words used to describe sugars in foods and drinks that are capable of causing tooth decay are: *Sucrose, dextrose, glucose, fructose, hydrolysed starch, honey, invert sugar and corn syrup.*

Dried fruits such as raisins are sticky and can stick to the teeth. They are also high in sugar and can contribute to the development of tooth decay.

Fruit juices and drinks containing natural sugar can also cause tooth decay and acid erosion and therefore should also be limited to meal times only.

Visit the dentist

Take your child to the dentist for regular checkups.



★ Healthy snacks and drinks ideas

Savoury sandwiches, plain bagels, unsweetened cereals, homemade plain popcorn, pretzels (low-salt), plain crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes, melba toast, baked potato pieces.

Fruit and vegetable pieces like celery, carrot sticks, cucumber, tomatoes, berries, oranges, melons, pineapple, pears, tangerines, canned fruits in natural juices.

Cheeses like edam, gouda and cheddar.

Lean sliced meats, boiled egg, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, unsalted nuts.

Water should be available to drink at any time of the day. It quenches thirst, does not spoil the appetite and does not harm teeth.

Milk does not harm teeth when given between main meals but be careful not to offer milk freely as it may spoil a child's appetite. Milk could be included as part of snack time.

Always check for potential allergies when introducing your child to new foods or drinks.



Remember

Adult supervision and help whilst toothbrushing should be given to children until the age of 7

Make sure your child brushes their teeth twice a day for at least 2 minutes

Try to limit sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes only

In between meals choose healthy snacks and drinks

Take your child for regular check-ups at the dentist



KEY ORAL HEALTH POINTS

FOR CHILDREN



Water should be available to drink at any time of the day. It quenches thirst, does not spoil the appetite and does not harm teeth.

Try to limit sugary foods to mealtimes only. Eating sugar too often can cause tooth decay.

Milk does not harm teeth when given between main meals but be careful not to offer milk freely as it may spoil a child's appetite. Milk could be included as part of snack time.

Drinks such as sugar free squashes and other diet drinks contain citric acid which can soften the teeth and dissolve the tooth surface 'enamel' causing acid erosion.

Dried fruits such as raisins are sticky and can stick to the teeth. They are also high in sugar and can contribute to the development of tooth decay so ideally limit to a meal time only.

Fruit juices and drinks containing natural sugar can also cause tooth decay and acid erosion. These should be limited to mealtimes only.

Words used to describe sugars to foods that are capable of causing tooth decay are: Sucrose, dextrose, glucose, fructose, hydrolysed starch, honey, invert sugar and corn syrup.





ORAL HYGIENE



Plaque left on and around the teeth and gums can cause gum disease and contribute to the development of tooth decay.

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Children should be supervised and helped with toothbrushing until the age of 7 as they are not able to remove plaque effectively.

Toothbrushes should be changed when the bristles are splayed. Choose a toothbrush that is age appropriate with nice soft to medium bristles.



Remember to brush all surfaces/sides of the teeth, paying special attention to the biting surfaces where food can stick and get trapped in the fissures.

Always remember to brush the gums as well as the teeth to remove the sticky plaque.

Toothbrushing should be carried out using gentle circular movements, starting at the back of the mouth and moving forwards, repeat on both sides, top and bottom. Care must be taken to not damage the gums.

There is no need to rinse after toothbrushing, just spit out any remaining toothpaste.

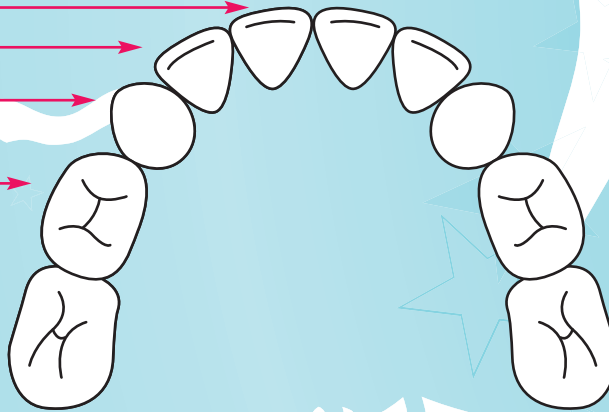


Primary Teeth Development Chart

This chart shows when children's primary teeth (also known as baby teeth) are most likely to erupt (break through the gums). Please note that eruption times can vary from child to child.

Upper Teeth

	When tooth emerges (months)	When tooth falls out (years)
Central Incisor	8 - 12	6 - 7
Lateral Incisor	9 - 13	7 - 8
Canine (cuspid)	16 - 22	10 - 12
First Molar	13 - 19	9 - 11
Second Molar	25 - 33	10 - 12



Lower Teeth

	When tooth emerges (months)	When tooth falls out (years)
Second Molar	23 - 31	10 - 12
First Molar	14 - 18	9 - 11
Canine (cuspid)	17 - 23	9 - 12
Lateral Incisor	10 - 16	7 - 8
Central Incisor	6 - 10	6 - 7

