

Toothbrushing

Tips to improve your child's oral health

Children up to three years old should use toothpaste with a fluoride level of at least 1,000ppm (parts per million).

After three years, they should use toothpaste with a fluoride level of 1,350-1,500ppm. The level of fluoride can be found on the pack.

Children aged 0–3yrs should use a smear a toothpaste. Children age 3+ should use a pea-sized amount.



Teeth and gums should be brushed twice a day – in the morning after breakfast and at night before bed.

Teeth should be brushed for at least two minutes – using a timer can be a good idea. Spit the toothpaste out after brushing, but do not rinse. Leaving fluoride on teeth helps to protect them throughout the day/night. Mouthwash should be used at a different time to toothbrushing – this can be after school or after dinner, for example.

It's best to help and supervise children under seven years old. Visit your dentist on a regular basis, and at least twice a year.

Your child's diet

Teeth start to decay thirty minutes after eating food or drinking drinks containing sugar.

You should:

- limit foods containing sugar, such as biscuits, sweets and cakes to mealtimes only.
- only have fizzy and flavoured water or milkshakes to at mealtimes
- never put sweetened drinks into bottles or baby feeders.

Always remember it is the frequency (how often you have sugary foods and drinks) rather than the AMOUNT that affects tooth decay, so keep them to mealtimes.

Tooth friendly food and drinks for snacks include: water, apples, pears, carrots, cheese, breadsticks, banana, cucumber, buttered toast, grapes and plain rice cakes, to mention just a few.

Visiting your dentist

At approximately six years old, children's first adult molar teeth erupt at the back of the mouth. Ask your dentist about protecting your child's back teeth with fissure sealant to help avoid tooth decay.

Fluoride varnish can be used to reduce the risk of tooth decay. This can be applied by your dentist at least every six months.



To summarise

- Encourage children to brush at least twice a day and remember to help and supervise those under the age of seven years.
- Healthy eating = healthy teeth.
- Make sure you and your child visit the dentist regularly.

Useful websites

Toothbrushing apps:

- Brushdj
- Aquafresh brush time

Toothbrushing charts:

- Childsmile.org.uk
- Colgate.com (dental games also found here)
- Sesamestreet.org
- Nickjr.com (Dora toothbrushing checklist)

Useful websites

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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