

Looking after your Child's Teeth

Parent and Carer Information

Health Visiting/School Nursing

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Tooth brushing

A regular teeth-cleaning routine is essential for good dental health.

Teeth should be brushed as soon as they appear in the mouth.

An ideal toothbrush should have a small head with soft/medium textured bristles.

For children less than three years of age, use a smear of ordinary family fluoride toothpaste. For children over three years of age, use a pea-sized blob.

Fluoride is important as it helps to make teeth stronger.

There is no fluoride in the local water supply.

Brush teeth and gums last thing at night and one other time during the day.

Children need help with tooth brushing up to the age of seven to eight years.

Your child should spit out after brushing and not rinse. This helps the fluoride to work for longer on the teeth.

Drinks

- Milk and plain water are the only safe drinks for healthy teeth.
- All juices (fresh or cordial) - even the low or reduced sugar ones - can damage your child's teeth.
- Sugar free, no added sugar, low sugar, fizzy and diet drinks are all very acidic and can harm teeth if given too often.
- Children under four years of age should not have sugar free or diet drinks, as artificial sweeteners are not recommended for young children.
- Look out for aspartame, saccharin and sorbitol as they are all artificial sweeteners.

Food

Sugar can cause tooth decay if given often to children lots of times during the day and at night. It is important to prevent tooth decay by cutting down how often your child has food and drinks with added sugar.

- Keep sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes only.
- Make sure that any foods are sugar free.
- Fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, cheese, toast, plain rice cakes are healthier choices.
- Dried fruits are very sticky and sugary and should be kept to mealtimes.
- Do not use sweets as a reward for children; try stickers, stars or small toys.

Watch out for hidden sugars! Sugar is also known by the following names:

Glucose, glucose syrup, fructose, sucrose, dextrose, honey, maltose.

Visiting the dentist

NHS dental care for children is free. Take your child to the dentist when their first milk teeth appear. This is so they become familiar with the environment and get to know the dentist. The dentist can advise you on how to prevent decay and identify any oral health problems at an early stage. Take your child for regular dental check-ups as advised by the dentist.

Sugar free medicines

Medicines are often spread out over the day and may be given during the night. Medicines that contain sugar can cause tooth decay. Always ask for sugar free medicines for your child at the pharmacy or doctors.

Remember

- Brush teeth and gums last thing at night and one other time during the day.
- Reduce the amount of sugary foods and drinks given in a day and keep them to mealtimes.
- Drinks that contain acids, for example diet drinks and natural fruit juices are harmful to teeth.
- Visit the dentist as often as they recommend.
- Always ask for sugar free medicines.

A list of local dental practitioners is available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-Dentist>

For more information contact your Oral Health Improvement team.

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Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

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This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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