

Oral Health & Healthy Eating

Toothbrushing helps prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Tooth brushing should start as soon as the first primary (baby) tooth comes through.

Teeth should be brushed at least twice every day, once at bedtime and on one other occasion, lasting for approximately 2 minutes each time. **The Brush DJ app** can help encourage brushing for the recommended length of time, with its 2-minute music timer.

Children should be encouraged to spit out the toothpaste and not to rinse their mouth with water. This allows the fluoride in the toothpaste to stay on the teeth for longer.

It is important for toothpaste to contain fluoride as fluoride prevents tooth decay. Children must be supervised so they don't eat or lick toothpaste from the tube and to control the amount used.

A smear of toothpaste should be used for 0-3-year-olds. A pea size amount of toothpaste should be used for 3-6-year-olds. The amount of fluoride in the toothpaste is written on the packaging as 'PPM', this means 'part per million'. Toothpaste contains 1350-1500 PPM fluoride gives your child the best protection.

Did you know? – A toothbrush with a small size head and medium texture bristles helps make toothbrushing more effective.

Preventing Tooth Decay Through Diet

Diet can have a significant impact on tooth decay. The following simple changes can have a significant impact:

- Reducing the number of times sugary foods and drinks are consumed
- Limiting sugary food to main meals
- Drinking only milk and water. Sugary drinks have no place in a child's daily diet
- Only prescribing and administering sugar free medicines

FOODS THAT DAMAGE TEETH



Erosion – Prevention

Energy drinks, fizzy drinks and fruit juices cause tooth erosion. Safe drinks include water and milk.

Avoid frequent intake of acidic food and drinks and limit these to mealtimes (no more than one a day). Eating fresh fruit is an important part of a healthy diet. You should seek medical advice to manage reflux eating disorders and management of medications.

Did you Know? – Teeth should not be brushed after vomiting, reflux or eating and drinking acidic foods and drinks, as the teeth become soft and toothbrushing can cause teeth to wear away more quickly.



What age should a child go to the dentist for the first time?

“A visit should take place **by their first birthday, or six months after the first tooth becomes visible** — whichever is earlier,” says Stephanie Goodson, M.D., a paediatrician at University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital