

# Modified Toothbrushing Protocol for Child Care

## Recommendations:

- Children brush together in a group setting
- Child care providers brush with children
- **Brush:**
  1. After a meal or snack
  2. Brush for 2 minutes while seated at a table

This practice allows adult supervision and guidance while Modeling healthy behaviors. Brushing for a full two minutes teaches children that it takes time to properly care for one's own teeth. It will also encourage the children to brush after meals when at home.

There is no cavity protection without fluoride toothpaste.



## Careful attention must be paid to the transmission of germs

- Toothbrushes should never touch one another
- Pegboard storage can adequately separate brushes while drying and stored
- Do not store in baskets on shelves where children may reach them
- Brushes should be rinsed under hot water and hung in a sunny place to dry
- A new brush should be issued if cross contamination occurs
- Clean brush storage weekly & when contaminated, using soap & water and a bleach solution

## Parents should be asked to provide a toothbrush every other month (6 per year)

This enables child care providers to properly support each child's oral health.

### Instructions for purchase:

1. Choose a small handled toothbrush with soft bristles
2. Handles must fit into the toothbrush holder
3. Choose a brush specified "for children" by the manufacturer
4. Large brush heads do not permit proper brushing of the back teeth

## Labeling is imperative

1. Write the child's first and last name (or last initial) on the brush handle
2. Cover name with clear packing tape to prevent erasure
3. If the name wears off, relabel the toothbrush

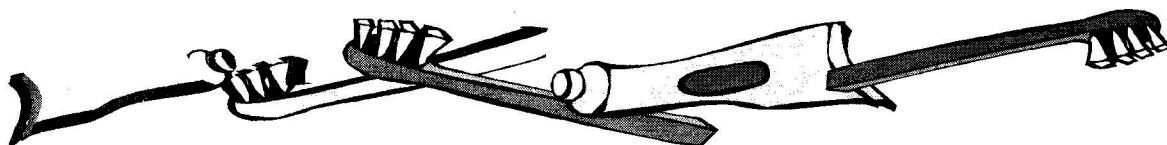
## Toothpaste should be child appropriate

- Many children complain that mint flavors burn their tongue
- Use of toothpaste should encourage children's brushing habits
- Distribution of the toothpaste is always a "teacher only" responsibility
- Use a smear of toothpaste only, just enough to flavor the brush
- Place half a pea-sized dot of paste on an individual cup, paper plate or piece of waxed paper
- No brush should ever come into contact with the original toothpaste tube

Be creative while educating healthy behaviors. Let brushing be fun with children taking turns being the toothbrush leader. Allow them to call "Go!" and "Stop!" to monitor the 2 minute period for brushing. Use a large egg timer to encourage Best Practice.

Jeanelle, Corrigan, RHD  
Oral Health Consultant  
Visiting Nurse Services

Source: Protocol adapted from Head Start's Modified  
Toothbrushing Protocol, Fall 2003



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