

# Good oral health

## Tooth care matters

In theory, tooth care should be quite simple - don't allow children to have sugary things too often and make sure their teeth are brushed well twice a day for two minutes. In practice, it's not that easy, the way sugary products are advertised and promoted can make it difficult to limit them.

Although it's not always easy, you should get your child into good habits at an early age and they will need your help with toothbrushing until they are seven. Make sure your child brushes their teeth last thing at night and at least one other occasion with a family fluoride toothpaste that has levels of between 1000-1450 parts per million (ppm) fluoride. Check the tube for fluoride content. When your child turns three, use a pea sized amount of toothpaste, prior to that use just a smear. Adults and children should spit not rinse after brushing with a fluoride toothpaste for maximum effectiveness.

**Get your child used to visiting the dentist and take them to an appointment with you to reassure them. Talk to your health visitor and take your child to a dentist as soon as you can. Ask your dentist about brushing on FLUORIDE VARNISH for added protection against tooth decay (for children aged three and above) - IT'S FREE!**

**From the age of three, children should be offered fluoride varnish treatment at least twice a year. Fluoride varnish should be offered two or more times a year for children of all ages with tooth decay or those at high risk of developing it.**

## Dentist says

As soon as teeth appear in the mouth, parents should brush their baby's teeth in the morning and last thing before bed.

Provide a healthy, balanced diet and limit sugary food and drinks to mealtimes only. Sugar or honey should not be added to weaning foods.

Introduce drinking from a cup from six months and stop bottle feeding by one year. If children are brought up to care for their teeth early on, it should stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

Do not give your toddler juice in a bottle or sippy cup. They may use this as a comforter and expose teeth to fruit sugar all day long.

## Tips which may help

Fizzy drinks can contain large amounts of sugar, which will increase the risk of tooth decay. All fizzy drinks, fruit juice and smoothies contain acids that can erode the outer surface of the tooth.

If you do have sugary, fizzy drinks, fruit juice or smoothies, drinking these at meal times can help reduce the damage to teeth. The best drinks to give children are water and milk.

Try diluting fruit juice with sparkling water instead of giving fizzy drinks. Remember to dilute squashes well to reduce the sugar content in the drink. Diet versions of fizzy drinks also contain very few nutrients. Milk or water are much healthier choices, especially for children.

Pick up some tips for reducing the amount of sugar in drinks and meals at <https://www.nhs.uk/sugar-smart/home>

Source: NHS Choices

## Good habits

Use a family fluoride toothpaste right from the start. Remember that good tooth care will come from you, mums and dads, brothers and sisters. Take opportunities to let them watch you brushing your teeth. Explain what you are doing and why you are doing it. Try to make it fun. Visit the dentist as a family.

## Brush DJ

This app can help encourage children to brush for 2 minutes.

## Oral Health Foundation

[www.dentalhealth.org/tell-me-about](http://www.dentalhealth.org/tell-me-about)

## NHS choices

Dental health, oral health and teeth - Live Well - NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**1**

Golden rule - support your child brushing their teeth with a fluoridated toothpaste last thing at night and at least one other occasion every day.

**2**

It's never too early to start taking your child to the dentist.

**3**

Tooth decay is almost totally preventable. Get it right from the start. Know what causes teeth to go bad.