

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.

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.

See the link for more information.

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.

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.

10 Tips

1. Breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for babies.
2. Brush teeth as soon as the first primary tooth appears (at approximately 6 months of age).
3. Teeth should be brushed at least twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste, last thing at night and on at least one other occasion.
4. Brushing at bedtime ensures that the fluoride continues protecting the teeth while children sleep.
5. For maximum protection from tooth decay use a family toothpaste containing 1350 to 1500 ppm of fluoride but only a small amount. Children under 3 years old should use a smear of toothpaste, and children aged 3-6 years no more than a pea-size amount.
6. Parents/carers should brush or supervise tooth brushing until at least 7 years of age.
7. Don't rinse with water after brushing teeth as this rinses off the fluoride from the tooth. Spitting out excess toothpaste is preferable.
8. The amount of foods and drinks that contain free sugars should be reduced.
9. Avoid foods and drinks containing sugar at bedtime. **Sugar-free** medicine should be recommended.
10. Parents/carers should be advised to take their children to visit the dentist for preventive advice as soon as they are born.