

Oral Health FACT SHEET

3-6 YEARS

Keeping good habits

Brushing

Advice: Brush teeth twice a day for 2 minutes – last thing before bed and at least one other time in the day using a pea sized amount of fluoride tooth paste with at least 1350ppm (the amount of fluoride in the tube) and a small soft toothbrush. Parents/ Carers need to help and supervise toothbrushing to make sure all teeth are cleaned. After brushing encourage ‘spit out toothpaste, do not rinse out with water’. Don’t let children eat and swallow the tooth paste, and store out of reach. If it does become a battle try using two toothbrushes, ‘one to do and one to chew’, clean teeth in the bath, brushing together with parent/carer, looking in the mirror, to a song/tune e.g. Brush DJ app.



Diet

**Remember Sugar +
Plaque = Acid**

‘Acid attacks’ can damage the teeth and cause decay. Teeth need time to recover from the attacks so make snack times a healthy choice for teeth. The risk of tooth decay increases with the number of times that teeth are exposed to sugar (in foods and drinks) each day.

Advice: Avoid sugary foods and drinks; keep any sugary foods to mealtimes. Happy snacks for teeth can include fresh fruit/veg, toast, cheese, crackers pitta bread etc. Watch out for dried fruit and fruit juice and fruit/sweetened teas as these contain sugar which can lead to tooth decay, keep these to meal times if given. To reduce ‘pester power’ for sweets, make one day a week ‘sweetie day’. Try not to use sweets as a reward.

Dental visits

Advice: Take children to the dentist if you haven’t done so already and return as often as the dentist recommends. Ask the dentist about fluoride varnishes from 3 years old.

Cups

Advice: Always use an open cup to promote sipping not sucking which is better for eating and speech. Avoid cans of fizzy drinks, sports drink bottles and sweetened flavoured milk which can damage teeth and cause dental decay especially to front teeth. Water and milk are the only safe drinks for teeth. If sugary drinks and juices are given, dilute well and keep to mealtimes and only ever give in a cup. Never give sweet drinks at bedtime, water is best.



Starting school

Advice: By the time they start school children should have visited the dentist. When children start school they are often very tired and the tooth brushing battle may begin again especially at bedtime.

Losing teeth

Advice: From about 6 years of age or earlier, teeth start to become loose and fall out. Watch out for a new one which is the adult molar tooth that appears at the back of the mouth behind the baby molars around 6 years of age. This tooth is often not brushed because it is hidden at the back of the mouth but it needs to last a lifetime.

Accidents

if a child knocks out a baby tooth

Advice: Calm the child down and clean away any blood with a clean damp tissue. Stop the bleeding by applying steady pressure for 20 mins with a clean handkerchief or kitchen towel. Never try and put a baby tooth back in. Contact your dentist or GP if you are at all worried or dial 111 for help and advice.