

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. 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. They will need your help until they are seven. Make sure your child brushes their teeth twice a day with a family fluoride toothpaste that has levels of 1450 parts per million (ppm) fluoride. When your child turns three, use a pea sized amount of toothpaste, prior to that use just a smear. Children (particularly young 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 to brush on FLUORIDE VARNISH for added protection against tooth decay (for children aged three and above) - IT'S FREE!

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.

Fizzy drinks

Fizzy drinks can contain large amounts of sugar, which will increase the risk of tooth decay. All fizzy drinks (both those containing sugar and sugar-free or diet versions) contain acids that can erode the outer surface of the tooth. If you do have sugary or fizzy drinks, drinking them with meals can help reduce the damage to teeth.

The best drinks to give children are water, milk and milkshakes without added sugar.

If you or your children like fizzy drinks, try diluting fruit juice with sparkling water instead. 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. 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.

1

Golden rule - never give a sugary drink last thing at night.

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.