

# Dental Health 0-17 years



## Healthy Lifestyles

# Dental Health

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Introducing your child to a routine of regular twice daily teeth cleaning at a young age will set them up for a life of good dental care, preventing tooth decay, gum disease and bad breath. Don't forget the best way to lead is by setting a good example yourself.

### Find out more

For further information about how to look after your child's teeth, visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) - Search 'looking after your baby's teeth'.

To find out how much sugar is in your food and drink visit [www.nhs.uk/change4life/sugar](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/sugar)



To find an NHS dentist visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) – Search 'find an NHS dentist'.

## Top tips for top teeth!



- Start brushing as soon as the first tooth appears, usually at about six months old, at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. This should be last thing at night and on at least one other occasion.
- Brushing last thing at night helps protect your child's teeth while they sleep.
- You should help or brush your child's teeth until they're at least seven years old, to make sure teeth are cleaned properly.
- Brush your child's teeth thoroughly, cleaning all surfaces of the teeth.
- For older children, disclosing tablets can help show if any plaque is left on the teeth.
- Choose a toothbrush with a small head and medium textured bristles, a manual or electric toothbrush can be used.
- For children who may have difficulties brushing their teeth, such as those with additional needs, toothbrush adaptations are available.
- Remember to look after your teeth too!

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## Brushing younger children's teeth

For the maximum prevention of tooth decay for children aged 0 to 6 years old, use a toothpaste which contains 1350-1500 parts per million (ppm) fluoride. The amount of fluoride in a toothpaste can be found on the side of the tube or packaging. Do not let your child lick or eat toothpaste.

Age	Toothpaste - fluoride strength	Amount
0-3 years	No less than 1000ppm	
3-6 years	More than 1000ppm	

Encourage your child to spit the toothpaste out after brushing and don't let them rinse with water. This washes away the fluoride and reduces how well it works, so spit don't rinse!

## Top tips for older children (12-17 years)

As part of a daily oral health routine, in addition to brushing it's important for older children to clean between their teeth using an interdental brush.

Some teenagers may not have large enough spaces between their teeth for an interdental brush, so flossing can be a useful alternative. Your dental team will show you the best way to clean between teeth.

If your child has an orthodontic brace, ensure they clean both their teeth and appliance carefully, as shown by your dental team.

## Visiting the dentist

Take your child to see the dentist as soon as their teeth start to appear, certainly before their first birthday and visit as often as your dentist recommends.

Ask your dentist about fluoride varnish. All children aged 3 to 16 should have this applied to their teeth. If younger children are at particular risk of tooth decay, your dentist may choose to apply fluoride varnish to their teeth.

NHS dental treatment is free for children under 18 and for those up to 19 if they're in qualifying full-time education

Women are entitled to free NHS dental treatment while they're pregnant or if they've had a baby within 12 months of treatment commencing.

## Healthy eating tips

Each time we eat sugary food and drink, the bacteria in dental plaque produce acid that attacks teeth. If we eat or drink sugary foods frequently throughout the day, we have more 'acid attacks', which can lead to tooth decay.

### Babies

- Breast milk is the only food or drink babies need for around their first six months. Formula milk is the only suitable alternative to breast milk.
- From the age of six months, bottle-fed babies should be introduced to drinking from a free-flow cup.
- Bottle-feeding should be discouraged at 12 months.
- Only breast or formula milk or cooled, boiled water should be given in bottles.
- Only milk or water should be drunk between meals and avoid adding sugar to your baby's food or drink.

### For all children

- Reduce the amount and frequency of having food and drink containing sugar and only give sweet foods, including dried fruit, at mealtimes.
- Squashes sweetened with sugar and fizzy drinks, soft and juice drinks should not be part of your child's daily diet.
- Limit the amount of fruit juice and smoothies your child drinks to a maximum of one portion (150 mls) a day and ensure they drink it at mealtimes to reduce the risk of tooth decay.
- Always ask for sugar-free medicines.

If you would like more information on the different ways you can adopt a healthier lifestyle, look out for our other leaflets:

- Physical Activity
- Healthy Eating/ Healthy Weight
- Quitting Smoking
- Drinking Alcohol Sensibly
- Mental Wellbeing
- Sexual Health

You can find copies of all our leaflets, along with more information on healthy lifestyles at:

**[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-improvement](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-improvement)**

If you need to get online, our county's libraries offer free computer and internet access at most sites.

For more local information about staying healthy visit:

**[www.wisherefordshire.org](http://www.wisherefordshire.org)**

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