

Dental decay can be prevented. Children are not born with a sweet tooth they develop it if they are given lots of sugar in food and drinks. Follow the advice in this leaflet to help them make adult life with perfect, healthy teeth!

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Family Dental Care

How to take care of baby teeth

Look at
www.child-smile.org
for more
information

Why are first teeth important?

First teeth (or milk teeth/baby teeth) are important for a child's smile, eating, speech and confidence.

It is important to keep teeth healthy to avoid pain, infection and the need to take teeth out under general anesthetic.

It is important to keep teeth until they fall out naturally (the last baby tooth will not normally fall out until the child is about 12 years old).

Early loss of milk teeth can lead to crowding when adult teeth come into the mouth. This may lead to a need for braces in later years.



What causes tooth decay?

Tooth decay starts as minor damage to the surface of teeth, but often worsens to the stage of becoming holes in teeth.

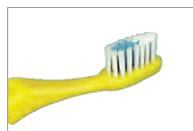


Decay is caused when bugs on our teeth (in that sticky layer or film called plaque) use the sugars in foods and drinks and turn these into acids which dissolve the surface of the teeth.

The more often that we eat or drink sugary things, the more often acid is produced and the more damage is caused to our teeth.

The best way to look after teeth is to avoid giving your child anything that has sugar in it to eat or drink between meals

Baby's Toothbrush and Toothpaste -which kind?



Use a toothbrush with a small head and soft bristles.

Put a **thin smear** of standard fluoride toothpaste (at least 1000ppm fluoride) onto a dry brush. Imagine you are painting the toothpaste on!

- Eventually encourage spitting out of excess toothpaste but

discourage rinsing the mouth with water. This helps the fluoride toothpaste work harder to strengthen the teeth.

- Replace the baby's toothbrush every 3 months or when the bristles start to splay out.
- Rinse the toothbrush after every use and store in a clean dry area.

Toothbrushing positions?
Stage 1 (first tooth)

You should start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as they appear (usually from about 6 months of age). Find a position that is comfortable for you and for your baby.

Stage 2 (toddler)

As your child gets older, try to include toothbrushing twice a day as part of morning and evening routine. Stand behind them at a sink and carefully brush each of the teeth in turn.

Stage 3 (pre-school)

Children should be encouraged to do some of the brushing themselves, to develop skills. An adult should assist them to brush their teeth until about 7 years of age and then watch them to make sure it's done well after that.