

Cleft and your child's oral health

5+ years



What should I expect for my child's oral health?

- Children with cleft lip and/or palate can be at higher risk of developing dental decay and having dental abnormalities such as extra or missing teeth.
- It is therefore essential that you follow advice on brushing, diet and regular dental visits for your child.
- The specialist cleft dental team as well as your local dentist will work together to look after your child's oral health but prevention is always our main goal.

What should I be expecting to see in my child's mouth at five years old?

- Your child's teeth are now at a stage where they are starting to change from baby to adult dentition.
- Over the next 18 months to two years, some of their baby teeth will start to feel loose.
- Usually the lower front (incisor) teeth are the first to become loose, followed by the upper incisors.
- Four of the back adult teeth (first permanent molars) will also start to come through, one in each corner of the mouth. These do not push any baby teeth but push through the gum.
- Your child may get some discomfort during this period and it is important to keep the area clean.

How should I clean my child's teeth?

- Brush your child's teeth at least twice a day.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste containing 1,350-1,500ppm of fluoride - a pea-sized amount if your child is over three years of age.
- Encourage your child to spit after brushing but not to rinse with water.
- Assist your child in brushing until they are at least eight years old.
- Your dentist can help to show you brushing and positioning techniques particularly around the cleft region.

What should my child eat and drink?

- Stick to savoury snacks such as cheese, raw vegetables, crackers, rice cakes and breadsticks.
- It is important to limit your child's intake of sugar containing foods or drinks. Avoid sweets, chocolates, cakes, juices and fizzy drinks but if your child is having these save them for to meal times.
- Acidic food and drinks can cause wear on the enamel on teeth (erosion) and therefore you should limit your child's intake of acidic food and drinks to mealtimes.
- Your child should avoid night-time drinks except for water. The only safe bed-time/night-time drink is water.

Remember that it is about how often your child is having sugary foods and drinks, not just the amount.

What professional interventions will my child need?

- Your local dentist should apply fluoride varnish to your child's teeth 2-4 times a year.
- Fissure sealants (plastic coatings) may be placed on the biting surface of the adult molars to prevent decay.
- As part of the cleft care the cleft multidisciplinary team will see your child at specified time intervals.

Contact us

South Thames Cleft Services Dental Department

1st floor, South Wing
St Thomas' Hospital
Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7EH

t: 020 7188 1321

e: cleftservices@gstt.nhs.uk

Main switchboard

t: 020 7188 7188

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit

w: www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm

e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

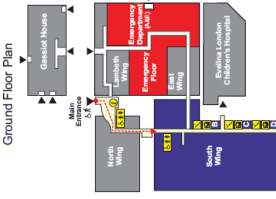
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS)

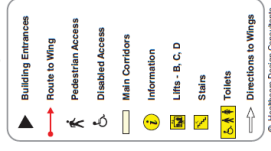
e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

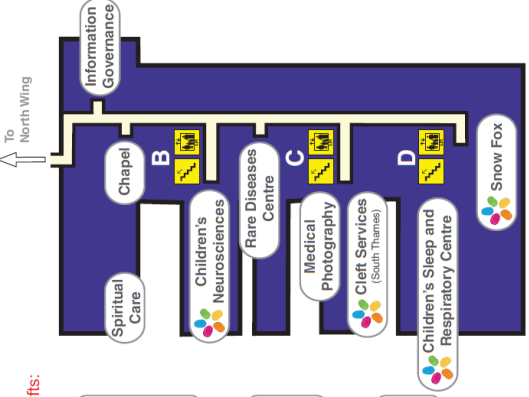
e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk



Key



South Wing - First Floor



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- Outpatients
- Rare Diseases Centre
- Services
- Information Governance
- Spiritual Care

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- Cleft Services
- Outpatients
- Medical Photography
- Myology

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- Children's Services
- Sleep and Respiratory Centre
- Snow Fox

We're smoke-free

No photos