

# Your child's oral health

**This leaflet gives you information about looking after your child's teeth and gums. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

Here are a few tips to improve your child's oral health.

## Toothbrushing

Children up to three years old should use toothpaste with a fluoride level of at least 1,000ppm (parts per million). After three years, they should use toothpaste with a fluoride level of 1,350 – 1,500ppm. The level of fluoride can be found on the packet.

Age 0 – 3 years: Use a smear of toothpaste  
Age 3+: Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste

Teeth and gums should be brushed twice a day – once in the morning after breakfast, and at night before bed. Brushing teeth for at least two minutes, using a timer is always a good idea.

Spit the toothpaste out after brushing. **Do not rinse!** Leaving fluoride on teeth helps to protect them throughout the day/night.

A mouthwash should be used at a different time to toothbrushing – after school, for example.

It's best to help and supervise children under seven years old.

## Your child's diet

Teeth start to decay thirty minutes after eating food or drink containing sugar.

You should limit foods containing sugar, such as biscuits, sweets and cakes to mealtimes only. Fizzy and flavoured water or milkshakes should also only be drunk at mealtimes.

Never put sweetened drinks in bottles or baby feeders.

Always remember it is the **frequency** (how often you have sugary foods and drinks), rather than the **amount** that affects tooth decay, so keep these foods to mealtimes.

Some examples of tooth-friendly food and drinks for snacks are: water, apple, pear, carrot, cheese, breadstick, banana, cucumber, buttered toast, grapes and plain rice cakes.

## Visiting your dentist

Visit your dentist on a regular basis – at least twice a year.

At approximately six years old, children's first adult molar teeth erupt at the back of the mouth. Ask your dentist about protecting your child's back teeth with fissure sealant to help avoid tooth decay.

Fluoride varnish can be used to reduce the risk of tooth decay. This can be applied by your dentist at least every six months.

## To summarise...

Encourage your child to brush at least twice a day and remember to help and supervise children under seven years old.

### Remember

Healthy eating + regular dental visits  
=  
healthy teeth

## Useful sources of information

### Toothbrushing apps:

**Brushdj** – The free, NHS-approved award-winning Brush DJ app makes brushing your teeth fun and effective!

**Aquafresh brush time** – The Aquafresh Nurdles show your child fun ways to brush all parts of their teeth. Catchy songs are played while a timer counts down for two minutes (the recommended brushing time by the British Dental Health Foundation).

### Toothbrushing charts:

- [Childsmile.org.uk](http://Childsmile.org.uk)
- [Colgate.com](http://Colgate.com) (dental games also found here)
- [Sesamestreet.org](http://Sesamestreet.org)
- [Nickjr.com](http://Nickjr.com) (Dora toothbrushing checklist)

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## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our department on **t: 020 7188 7188 ext 55262** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://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 10am to 5pm, Mon to Fri

**e:** [letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto: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](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

**e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## **NHS 111**

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

## **NHS Choices**

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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