

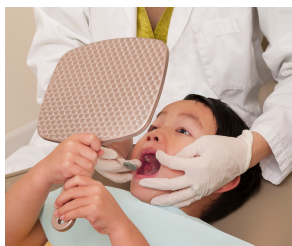
Visiting the dentist

Take your child to the dentist as soon as the first teeth erupt and the dental team can give you the appropriate oral health advice for your child. Ask your dentist about fluoride varnish.

Mums are entitled to free NHS treatment during pregnancy and until their child is one year old, and children are entitled to free NHS treatment.

ORAL HEALTH

CARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S TEETH



Top tips



The following key points provide a summary of the simple steps that you and your family can take every day to protect and improve your child's dental health.

Evidence tells us that tooth brushing with fluoride toothpaste is one of the most effective ways of preventing dental decay. Gum disease can also be prevented by regular thorough tooth brushing to remove plaque.

Start brushing your child's teeth as soon as the first baby tooth appears (usually at about 6 months of age) and brush all tooth surfaces and the gum line where plaque gathers.

Brush the teeth at least twice a day, last thing at night before bed and at least on one other occasion. Brushing at bedtime ensures the fluoride continues working while your child is asleep and when saliva flow decreases

Parents/carers should brush or help their child in brushing their teeth until they are at least seven years old. This helps to supervise the amount of toothpaste they use and make sure that the teeth are thoroughly cleaned.

When choosing a toothbrush for your child, choose a small headed toothbrush with medium texture bristles. Use either a manual or powered (rotation action), However, more important is using the brush effectively at least twice a day.

Looking after your child's teeth

The most important thing you can do to prevent dental decay is use appropriate fluoride toothpaste

- Toothpastes containing 1350 – 1500 parts per million fluoride (ppmF-) are the most effective at helping to prevent tooth decay.
- The amount of fluoride that is in the toothpaste can be found on the side of the tube.
- For children under three years old use a smear of toothpaste containing no less than 1000 ppm F- (Fig 1)
- Children between three and six years old should use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing more than 1000 ppm fluoride (Fig 2).
- Spit out excess toothpaste after brushing but do not rinse with water as this washes away the fluoride.
- Do not let your child lick or eat the toothpaste from the tube.
- For older children, disclosing tablets can help to show where areas of the tooth surface have been missed when brushing.

Healthy Eating

Sugar consumption is the major cause of tooth decay

Encourage your child to eat a healthy balanced diet rich in fruit, vegetables and starchy foods and some proteins and milk and dairy products but low in fats, sugar and salt. Always ask for and use sugar-free medicines..

Check out our leaflet

Healthy Snacks & Packed Lunches