

Teeth Care

For babies and children

Eating and drinking

Drinks

- Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed babies.
 - Only put water, infant formula or expressed breast milk in bottles.
 - Giving sweet drinks like cordial, soft drinks, flavoured milks or juice in feeding bottles or sipper cups may cause tooth decay.
 - Around six months of age is a good time for baby to start trying to use a cup.
 - Offer your baby drinks in a cup. Most babies can drink from a cup by around 12 months of age.
- Try and not let baby fall to sleep with a bottle. Even plain milk can cause decay if in the mouth for a long time.
 - Settle baby with a toy or book rather than a feeding bottle.
 - If your child wants a feeding bottle after 12 months, take it away as soon as they have finished drinking or just put water in it.

After six months, tap water is the best drink for babies and children when they need more, like on hot days.

Boil and cool water to make it safe for your baby until they are 12 months old.

Cleaning babies and childrens teeth



Start to clean teeth as soon as they show

Use a soft cloth at first using only water. For older babies use a soft toothbrush.



At 18 months use a pea size amount of children's fluoride tooth paste

Clean your child's teeth. Show them how to spit and not rinse.



Clean your child's teeth until they are six

Help them until they are eight. Use an adult tooth paste from age six unless told otherwise.

Food and eating

- Offer breakfast, lunch and dinner with a snack in between rather than let your child graze on food over the day.
- Offer foods from the five food groups grain (cereal), vegetables, fruit, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods or alternatives.
- Sweet, sticky foods such as dried fruits, fruit roll-ups and 'sometimes' foods like muesli bars, lollies, sweet biscuits and chocolate are not foods to eat every day. When you do give these foods, make it part of a meal.
- If your child has a dummy, do not put anything sweet on it such as honey, chocolate, jam or sugar.

Dental visits

Visit the dentist when your child is 12 months old. An early dental visit can help keep your child's smile healthy.

Your dental professional will tell you when you need to come back for another visit. Regular dental checks are important.

Parent teeth care

Parents and carers can pass decay causing germs to their baby.

You can stop this by:

- not sharing feeding spoons with children
- not cleaning the feeding bottle teat or dummy in your mouth
- brushing your own teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and spitting not rinsing.

Want to know more

Ask your dental professional or child health nurse.