






Information for Parents on Children's Teeth

Registration with a dentist

You can register your baby with a dentist soon after birth in order to receive important advice about how to prevent dental disease. All too often dentists see young children for the first time when they already have tooth decay or pain.

Advice...







-  Register your baby with a dentist soon after birth.
-  Your dentist or hygienist can provide advice on preventing dental disease and answer any questions you may have.
-  Take your baby to the dentist with the rest of the family.
-  Dental disease can be spotted and treated early, avoiding the need for teeth to be taken out.
-  Your child will get used to going to the dentist and not be worried about dental visits.

Dental treatment is free on the National Health Service up to 18 years of age and for mothers for one year after the birth of their baby. If you do not have your own family dentist, ask a friend or relative to recommend a dentist who they find good with children

Fluoride Toothpaste

Start brushing teeth with fluoride toothpaste as soon as your baby's first tooth comes through.


Advice...

-  Ask your dentist about the level of fluoride in the toothpaste most appropriate for your baby.
-  Fluoride toothpastes, such as one from the Colgate Smiles range strengthen teeth.
-  Use a small-headed, soft toothbrush, such as one from the Colgate Smiles range, and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
-  Babies and children need supervising when brushing until they are at least 7 years of age. They do not have the skills to do this properly for themselves.
-  You will need to supervise the amount of toothpaste they use and encourage them to spit out the excess.
-  Children love imitating and can learn to brush by watching other members of the family.


Fluoride Supplements

Some children may benefit from using fluoride supplements in addition to brushing with a fluoride toothpaste. Please consult your dentist for advice on the use of fluoride supplements.

Brushing Your Child's Teeth

 Brush your child's teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

One of these occasions should be the last thing at night when the protective effect of saliva is reduced and the beneficial effects of fluoride are greatest.


 Place a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on a toothbrush and carefully brush all surfaces of all the teeth.


 Encourage the child to spit out afterwards.

 Rinsing with water reduces the benefits of the toothpaste.


Are Baby Teeth Important?


Parents often think that baby teeth are not important as they are replaced by another set when the child is older.


 Healthy baby teeth are important for a child's self-confidence and smile.


 They enable children to bite and chew properly.

 Baby teeth are necessary for clear speech.

 Baby teeth keep a space for adult teeth to form in the right place.

 Decayed baby teeth can become infected which leads to abscess formation and pain.


 If baby teeth are not looked after properly, extraction under general anaesthetic may be necessary, an unpleasant experience for young children.


 Some baby teeth are not shed until the child is 11 or 12 years old.

Teething


Teething is a common cause of discomfort and can result in sleepless nights for babies and parents. Babies who are teething may dribble excessively, be irritable and restless, have a raised temperature or have a red or slightly swollen face. If your baby is unwell for any length of time, or shows more severe symptoms such as stomach upset, take them to see a doctor.

You can help...






 Give your baby something hard to bite on. A variety of teething rings are available.

 Massage your baby's gums with a clean finger.

 Teething gel can be helpful.

 If sleep is very disturbed, give sugar-free paracetamol according to the manufacturer's instructions.

From 6 months old...

-  Encourage your child to move from drinking from a bottle to using a cup.
-  Only give a child a cup when they are thirsty, don't use it as a comforter.
-  If you use a valved cup, make sure your child is using it correctly and getting enough to drink.
-  A child should drink at least 6-8 cups of water through the day.
-  Restrict sweet drinks to mealtimes only.

Sugar-free Medicines

Unfortunately, medicines containing sugar can cause tooth decay if given frequently for long periods of time. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if sugar-free alternatives are available. If possible, give medicines at mealtimes and not last thing at night.

Accidents to Teeth

If a tooth is knocked out, broken, or pushed out of position, it is important to seek advice from your dentist as soon as possible.

Don't forget...

Teeth need cleaning as soon as they appear.

By caring for your child's teeth and gums right from the very start you can do a great deal to prevent painful tooth decay in the years ahead.

Encourage regular brushing using a soft-bristled toothbrush and use no more than a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.

Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.

