

Top Tips - Good Oral Hygiene for your Child:

(These top tips go alongside Lunch box ideas and healthy eating and have been added to the revised EYFS curriculum 2020 as a current requirement to promote children's health.)

There are some simple steps you can take to help your child get into good habits that will protect their teeth from decay.

- Brush twice a day, before bedtime and in the morning. Make sure you are on hand to supervise your child as they brush their teeth, checking they're brushing thoroughly for at least two minutes. Set a timer on your phone or brush along to a favourite song.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste. Check on the packaging that the amount of fluoride in the toothpaste is between 1350 and 1500 parts per million (ppm). When they have finished brushing, make sure they spit out the excess toothpaste, but do not rinse with water as all the fluoride that's left will be washed away.
- Replace their toothbrush every three months. Worn brushes do not clean teeth properly, so replace them regularly.
- Keep sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes. A healthy, balanced diet helps to prevent gum disease, but in real life it can be tricky to limit sugary treats. If you do want to give your child sweet things, save them for mealtimes and stick to plain water or plain milk in between to avoid a sugary build up on teeth.
- Make sure you see a dentist regularly. Start to take your child to the dentist with you and register them. NHS dental care for children is free, and regular visits to the dentist (at least once a year) help to prevent tooth decay. You can find your local NHS dentist here. <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Spotting tooth decay in little ones:

- Chalky white lines on the surface of the tooth close the gum are an early warning sign of tooth decay. At this stage, changes to what your child eats and use of fluoride toothpaste will stop things getting worse. For children over three years old, the dentist will apply a fluoride varnish on the teeth for extra protection.
- If nothing is done, the decay will turn into brown and sometimes black areas on the tooth which become painful. Sometimes dentists can put a filling in, but often the tooth must be taken out altogether.
- If you think your child's suffering with toothache, give them sugar-free medicine and see a dentist as soon as you can. You can get an emergency appointment by calling 111.

Urgent treatment if a tooth is damaged or knocked out:

- If your child has an accident and loses or damages a tooth, you need to get them emergency dental treatment right away. Phone your dentist, and even if it is outside normal practice hours, they will give you information on where to go for emergency care. You can also phone 111.