

# Children's Teeth

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It is recommended that children go to the dentist, along with their parents, as soon as possible. You should ensure that they attend for regular check-ups, usually every six months. This will help them to get used to the strange environment, noises and smells. The earlier the children visit, the more relaxed the visit to the dentist will be.

Cleaning your child's teeth should be part of their daily hygiene routine.



When the first teeth start to come through into the mouth, try using a children's toothbrush with a small smear of children's toothpaste.

Once all the teeth have come through, use a small-headed toothbrush in a circular motion, and try to concentrate on one tooth at a time.

Don't forget to brush the back and biting surfaces of each tooth, and also on to the gums

If possible, make teeth brushing a routine, preferably in the morning and last thing before bed. Children will need help with brushing until the age of 7 or until good dexterity is developed.

Fluoride comes from a number of different sources including toothpaste, specific fluoride applications and sometimes drinking water. These can all help to prevent dental decay. If you are unsure about fluoride, ask your dentist or health visitor.

The general rule is to use a toothpaste designed for your child's age group. Use a smear of paste up to 5 years, less than a pea size for 5 to 7 year olds, and a normal pea size for over 7s. Children should be supervised up to this age and you should make sure that they spit out the toothpaste and do not swallow any if possible.

Toothbrushes should be small-headed with soft, nylon bristles, suitable for your child's age group.

Toothache can be painful and upsetting, especially in children. The main cause of this is tooth decay. Tooth decay is caused by too much sugar, too often in the diet. Teething can also cause toothache, when teeth begin to grow into the mouth at about 6 months.

If your child needs pain relief always check with your GP, Dentist, health visitor or pharmacist. Make sure that all medicines are sugar free.

Fear in parents can usually be sensed by the child. It is important not to make your child feel that a visit to the dentist is something to worry about. If you have any fears about visiting the dentist yourself, do not discuss them in front of your child.

Regular check-ups when your child does not have a dental problem will mean that your child's first visit to the dentist is not associated with the distress caused by toothache or trauma.