

Children's teeth are important

Brush teeth at least twice a day, in the morning and immediately before bed.

- Brushing removes plaque, an invisible coating on the teeth. Bacteria living in the plaque cause tooth decay and gum disease
- Use a small, soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste
- Fluoride toothpaste is the preferred tooth cleaning agent. Using salt water to rinse the mouth may be recommended occasionally, by a dental professional
- Children under six years should use low fluoride toothpaste. Encourage children to spit toothpaste out, not swallow it
- Children under eight years need their parents help with tooth brushing. This is especially important at night, and around the age of six when permanent molar (chewing) teeth start to grow



Visit the dentist

Regular check ups are important from an early age to help prevent tooth decay and gum problems.

- Do not wait until your child is in pain to visit the dentist. For information on free dental check ups for children, phone the Child Dental Service on:

9293 3333

- If you do not speak English, phone the Telephone Interpreter Service on:

131 450

- and ask them to make an appointment for you
- Always visit the dentist when your child has a toothache, hole in the tooth, swelling or infection of the face or mouth, even if you are able to relieve the pain temporarily with home remedies
- When a baby tooth is loose, help your child to wiggle it out using a clean cloth. If the baby tooth is firm, and you can see the replacement tooth in the mouth, contact the Child Dental Service for advice



Eat healthy food for healthy teeth

Frequent snacks are a major cause of tooth decay.

- Limit the number of times snacks are eaten each day
- Pack healthy snacks like fruit, yoghurt and sandwiches in school lunch boxes. Starchy food such as chips, biscuits, and even rice can contribute to tooth decay, not just lollies and sweet food
- Drink plenty of water or milk (plain, not flavoured) in preference to juice or soft drinks. Frozen water is best for school lunch boxes
- Tap water is safe to use and contains fluoride. Use in preference to bottled water

