



helping
young children
with special needs
to have a
healthy
mouth ...



Introduction

Dental problems cause a great deal of pain to young children and treatment can be very stressful.

So, it is very important to avoid or limit dental treatment for children with special needs by keeping teeth healthy.

Fortunately, most dental diseases are preventable and this booklet gives parents and carers some

simple, practical advice on how to keep children's mouths looking and feeling great.

This includes specific advice about diet and tooth brushing.

Diet & Good Dental Health

Weaning

In order to give the baby teeth a chance to come through into the mouth in a healthy condition it is important to:

- Stop the bottle by 12 months of age.
- Introduce a sippy cup from 6 months of age.
- Do not use a bottle containing milk or juice as a night time comforter.



A dental professional can provide you with specific advice regarding your child's individual dental health needs.

Diet & Good Dental Health

When your child is eating solid food

- Do not allow your child sugary snacks between meals.
- Foods containing sugar like flavoured yoghurts, muesli bars, dried fruit and fruit drinks should only be offered at meal times.
- Never allow your child sugary foods or drinks last thing at night.



- Provide healthy snacks between meals including fresh fruit, vegetable sticks, cheese & plain yoghurt.
- Provide meals and planned snacks at set times during the day to prevent 'grazing' as this leads to tooth decay.
- Drink tap water between meals.
- Avoid soft drinks, cordial or juice as they are high in sugar and are very acidic.
- Give dietary supplements at mealtimes where possible.



Tooth Brushing Tips



- Make sure you clean your child's teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste as soon as they come through into the mouth.
- Use a toothbrush with a small soft head.
- Young children need help with tooth brushing.
- Some parents put the child's head in their lap and others find standing behind their child is helpful when brushing the teeth.
- Some children find it easier to have their teeth cleaned with an electric toothbrush.
- Your child's dental team can give you personal advice about tooth brushing and the appropriate toothpaste to use.

Tooth Brushing Tips

IMPORTANT

1. Your child's teeth need to be brushed twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
2. Up to the age of 18 months use a smear of toothpaste on the toothbrush.
3. After 18 months use a pea sized amount of tooth paste on the toothbrush.

- A **superbrush** or a three sided toothbrush may help clean several tooth surfaces at once.



- Use two toothbrushes one to brush while the other distracts.
- If your child clamps on the toothbrush leave it as a prop, and use a second brush to clean the teeth you can reach.
- Two toothbrushes taped back to back may help keep the mouth open.

If your child doesn't want the teeth brushed

- Brushing different parts of their mouth at different times may help.
- Holding onto a vibrating object such as an electric toothbrush or toy may take the focus away from the mouth.
- Massage around the mouth and cheeks to improve muscle tone, saliva flow and desensitise the area.
- Try play activities that can help mouth functions such as mouth toys, blowing instruments, or using a straw.



Massaging the lips before or while brushing, can help you get the brush in mouth.

Tooth Brushing Tips

A strong tongue or tight lips

- The lips and cheek should be gently pulled back to allow you to see the teeth.
- A flannel or handkerchief can be wrapped around the forefinger to gently retract the lips.

Children who have difficulty swallowing

- Tooth brushing for children who are non-orally fed or have difficulty swallowing (dysphagia) is very important because leaving plaque and bacteria on the teeth can lead to chest infections.
- Brushing the teeth will make the mouth feel more comfortable and reduce any bad breath.
- To help make brushing easier for your child, tilt their head forward while brushing.
- Use a low foaming toothpaste, such as **Colgate My First Toothpaste & Macleans MilkTeeth.**

Medical conditions & medications

- Some medical conditions may increase your child's risk of dental disease.
- Certain medications may cause side effects such as dry mouth which can also increase your child's risk of dental disease.

- Your dental care professional can provide you with specific advice.

HELPFUL HINTS THAT OTHER PARENTS HAVE FOUND USEFUL

- Brushing teeth in the bath can be fun.



- Start brushing from the front, gently moving the brush to the back teeth.
- Distractions such as music or TV may be helpful.

Your child's individual home care plan

Tooth brushing & toothpaste

Diet

Other information

*Please call.....
if you have any problems or questions.*



TOOTH SMART CHART














Brush Smart
 Help my child to brush their teeth *morning and night.*



Snack Smart
 Give healthy snacks during the day.



Drink Smart
 Give tap water between meals.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						
						

Developed by Western Sydney Local Health District. Sponsored by the Centre for Oral Health Strategy NSW

Stay



Smart



Remember - **all** family members should practice Good Oral Health.

Public Dental Health Call Centre	Phone Number
Sydney South Western Sydney	(02) 9293 3333
South Eastern Sydney	1300 134 226
Illawarra Shoalhaven	1300 369 651
Northern NSW Mid North Coast Hunter New England	1300 651 625
Central Coast	1300 789 404
Northern Sydney	1300 732 503
Murrumbidgee Southern NSW	1800 450 046
Western Sydney	(02) 8890 6766
Nepean Blue Mountains	(02) 4734 2387 or 1300 769 221
Far West Western NSW	(02) 6809 8621 or 1300 552 626

Disclaimer

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