

# Oral health care for young children (0-3 years)

Babies generally get their first tooth between 6 and 8 months old, but it can be as early as 3 months or as late as 1 year before the tooth appears.

## A clean and healthy mouth heals more quickly

Parents/carers should start to brush young children's teeth and gums as soon as the first teeth appear in the mouth. Brush using a children's toothbrush and a smear of family fluoride toothpaste containing 1450 parts per million fluoride.

Do not rinse out after brushing. Encourage your child to spit out any remaining toothpaste.

Brush teeth last thing at night and one other time during the day.

## Diet

Breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for babies.

From six months of age infants should be introduced to drinking from a free flowing cup. From age one year feeding from a bottle should be discouraged. Never give sugary drinks in bottles or valve type feeder cups.

Sugar should not be added to weaning foods or drinks.

The best choices of drink for your infant are milk or plain water. Drinks other than milk or water should be limited to meal times.

Sugary foods and drinks between meals may cause tooth decay. Reduce the amount and frequency of sugary foods and drinks. Even no-added sugar juices contain enough sugar to cause tooth decay.

Many soft drinks are also very acidic and can cause wear of the teeth so try to avoid brushing straight after having a soft drink.

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The best choices for healthy snacks between meals are fresh fruit or vegetables or something savoury. Fruit can also be acidic so try to avoid brushing straight after eating fruit.

Keep dried fruits and any sugary snacks like biscuits, cakes, sweets or chocolate to mealtimes and avoid sugary foods and drinks at bedtime.

Sugar is also known by the following names: glucose, glucose syrup, fructose, sucrose, dextrose, honey, maltose, corn syrup. All of these can harm your teeth.

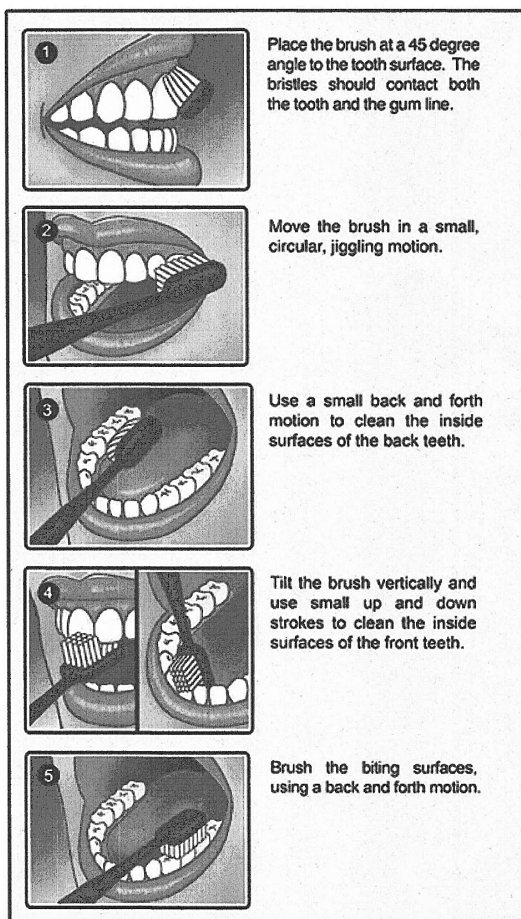
Always ask for sugar free medicines.

Do not use sweets as a reward for children - try stickers, stars or pencils.

## Visiting the dentist

Start to take your child to see the dentist when their first teeth come through, or before they are 1 even if they are unlikely to sit on the dental chair. Visit the dentist at least once a year (or as often as your dentist recommends).

## How to brush your teeth correctly



### Opening hours:

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm

Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm

**St Catherine's Health Centre Dental Clinic**

0151 514 6420

**Victoria Central Health Centre Dental Clinic**

0151 514 6266

**Leasowe**

0151 514 2340

### Out of Hours:

**Out of Hours Service 111**

**Revive Dental Care**

0161 476 9651

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email [wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net](mailto:wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net)

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