

Dental Health: advice for families



When should a child see a dentist?

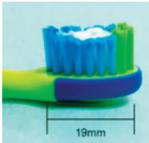
- An infant should start seeing a dentist soon after their first teeth appear.
- Dentists will advise on how regular check-ups should be. The majority of children are seen six monthly but this can vary depending on the needs of the child.
- Any dental treatment needed is free of charge for those aged under 18 or up to 19 if they are still in full-time education.

How do I find a dentist?

- You can find dentists in your area by visiting www.nhs.uk
- Speak with family and friends for their recommendations.

Helping your child to brush their teeth

- Children need supervising and help with brushing until they are at least seven years old.
- Start brushing when the first tooth appears.
- Wait 30 minutes after eating before brushing.
- Any child under the age of two should use a smear of toothpaste and anyone older use a pea sized amount.



- Brush the teeth in a circular motion along the gum line, twice a day for at least two minutes.
- Brush last thing at night and at least on one other occasion. Brushing before bed time is the most important and no foods should be consumed after this point. This includes milk.
- **Spit, don't rinse.** After brushing children ideally should be encouraged to only spit the toothpaste out and **not** rinse. Rinsing washes the fluoride in the toothpaste away and it needs to stay on the teeth for as long as possible to help protect them.
- Brushes should be changed every 2-3 months.

Which toothpaste?

Always use fluoridated toothpaste. The amount of fluoride can usually be found on the side of the tube or on the packaging.

- Children **under three years** should use a toothpaste containing no less than 1,000 ppm fluoride and should not eat or lick toothpaste from the tube.
- From three years family fluoride toothpaste should contain between 1350-1500 parts per million fluoride to give your child the best protection from tooth decay.

Diet and decay

- Too much sugar is not good for our general health and our teeth!
- Fizzy drinks containing sugar are one of the main causes of tooth decay.
Milk and water are best.
- Sugary food and drinks should be limited to **mealtimes**. Sugars should not be consumed more than four times per day.
- From six months of age infants should be introduced to drinking from an open cup.
- Babies over 12 months old should be discouraged from feeding from a bottle.
- Children should not sleep with a bottle of milk or any other drinks overnight – this can cause decay.
- Sugar should not be added to weaning foods.
- Always ask your doctor for sugar free medicines if possible.



What happens if a child knocks out one of their adult teeth or breaks it?

- If a child has knocked their tooth out they must see a dentist within one hour.
- Do not touch the root. Holding it by the top part, gently rinse the tooth in saline or water.
- If considered safe and age appropriate to do so put the tooth back in original position, or in child's cheek or in parent's or carer's cheek.
- If you do not feel comfortable with the above, or the child will not let you, store the tooth in cold fresh milk.
- If you are unable to find a dentist call NHS 111 immediately, to find where the appropriate A&E is with a dental team (sometimes these are called maxillo-facial surgery teams).
- Any broken teeth should be assessed by a dentist as soon as possible.
- Wear a mouth guard when playing contact sports to prevent injury.

Further information on children's oral health including dummies, fluoride varnish and other topics:

- www.healthysurrey.org.uk
- www.nhs.uk

Contacting us

Please visit www.childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk

Feedback

We are committed to putting children and young people first and continually improving services through listening and responding to feedback.

To share your experiences, please:

Email: CSH.patientexperience@nhs.net or fchc.enquiries@nhs.net

Call: 01306 646 223



Different formats

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print, easy read or another language, please get in touch with our Patient Experience Team using the contact details in the Feedback section above.

About Children and Family Health Surrey

Children and Family Health Surrey is the Surrey-wide NHS community health service for children and young people from birth up to 19 years of age and their parents and carers.

Visit www.childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk for information and contact details for all other Children and Family Health Services.