

## Your Child's Dental Health



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Tooth decay is avoidable, and you can help to keep your children's teeth healthy by following the simple tips within this leaflet.

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## Health Drinks and Snacks

### NO Sugar = NO Tooth Decay

- Eating habits are shaped when children are very young and can last a lifetime
- Eating healthy food that is low in sugar is very good for teeth and general health.
- Eating chopped fruit and vegetables does not cause tooth decay. Bread, breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese, natural yogurt or plain fromage frais (add your own fruit for extra flavour) are all tooth friendly snacks.
- Dried fruit given as a snack such as raisins increases the risk of tooth decay
- Dipping dummies into honey or sugary drinks can cause tooth decay
- Water and milk are the best tooth-friendly drinks
- Freshly prepared fruit juice and smoothies should be given only once a day and with a meal as they contain a high concentration of sugar
- Ask for sugar free medicines
- Introduce your child to a free-flowing beaker from 6 months of age and aim to discontinue the use of bottles at 12 months.

#### **Bottle Tooth Decay:-**



This can be caused by adding even a small amount of juice or squash to a baby's bottle containing water.

Prolonged use of a baby's bottle containing milk could also cause bottle tooth decay (the only safe drink in a bottle after one year is water)

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## Brushing

### Establish a good tooth-brushing routine early on:

Brush your child's teeth as soon as they appear, with a fluoride toothpaste. Public Health England's oral health toolkit recommends that parents use a toothpaste with at least 1000 ppm fluoride (most family strength toothpastes have 1500 ppm which isn't recommended until after the age of 3). You will find that a lot of child specific toothpaste has the ppm fluoride clearly labelled to make this easier for you.



Brush teeth twice a day for two minutes each time, making sure you brush every surface of every tooth. The best times for brushing teeth are before breakfast and after night-time milk.

Your child should be seen by a dentist once their teeth appear and attend regular check-ups.



Below the age of three years, children should use just a smear of toothpaste.



Children aged three to six should use a pea-sized blob of toothpaste.

Encourage your child to spit, not rinse

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This information was compiled by Emma Williams—Health Visitor for Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust, Theresa Spencer—Oral Health Educational Lead for Hertfordshire Special Care Dental Service and Miranda Reid—PA to Professional Lead for Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust



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