

Caring for your child's smile (0-6 Years)



- Mouth care should begin even before teeth appear. Your baby's gums can be wiped with a clean, damp cloth after each feed.
- When a few teeth are present, replace the cloth with a small, soft toothbrush and no toothpaste.
- For children aged 18 months to 5 years, use a small pea-sized amount of low fluoride toothpaste, then normal strength fluoride toothpaste for children aged 6 years or more. Children should spit out, not swallow and not rinse after brushing.
- Brush 'every bit of every tooth' at least twice a day, in the morning and before bed at night.
- Children should be encouraged to brush their own teeth however, will need parental assistance and supervision until around 8 years of age.
- Do not allow your baby to suck on a bottle for long periods or to fall asleep whilst feeding from a bottle. This will help prevent 'Early Childhood Caries' which is decay caused by frequent, prolonged use of a bottle containing sweet liquids such as milk, juice or cordial.
- If your infant needs a bottle to go to *sleep* or for *comfort*, then only cooled, boiled water should be given in the bottle.
- Introduce the use of a feeder cup from 6 months of age and help your baby to give up the bottle from 12 months of age.
- Provide a nutritious diet and avoid sweet, sticky snacks. Water (and milk in moderation) is the best thirst quencher.
- Avoid dipping the dummy in any sweet foods or liquids e.g. honey
- Keep your own teeth healthy as decay-causing bacteria, not found in newborns, can be passed from parent to child by sharing spoons or cleaning the dummy in your mouth.
- Check your child's teeth regularly and ideally start dental visits around 12 months of age, or sooner if you have any concerns.

*Good habits formed early, with reinforcement,
will be carried through for life!*

