



Oxfordshire Community Dental Service

# Looking after baby and toddler's teeth

# Contents

Milk teeth (baby teeth)..... 3

Teething..... 3

Toothbrushing..... 4

Drinks..... 5

Foods ..... 6

Medicines ..... 7

When to visit the dentist ..... 7

Accessibility ..... 8

Get in touch..... 8

Feedback ..... 8

## Milk teeth (baby teeth)

Your child will have 20 teeth which usually come through from the age of six months, but this can vary.

The enamel of milk teeth is usually thinner than permanent teeth. This means that milk teeth are more likely to be affected by dental decay or tooth wear which can happen if the teeth are exposed to too much sugar or acidic drinks.

## Teething

Most babies suffer when teething. Symptoms may include:

- ❗ Their gum is sore and red where the tooth is coming through.
- ❗ They have a mild temperature of less than 38C.
- ❗ They have one flushed cheek.
- ❗ They have a rash on their face..
- ❗ They're rubbing their ear.
- ❗ They're dribbling more than usual.
- ❗ They're gnawing and chewing on things a lot.
- ❗ They're more fretful than usual.
- ❗ They're not sleeping very well.

Teething gels or powders may help with the pain. Speak to your pharmacist.

Teething rings may help, and cool ones kept in the fridge can be comforting.

## Toothbrushing

As soon as your baby gets their first tooth it is important to start toothbrushing. Make toothbrushing part of their routine.

Developing a routine when they are young will help your child continue this routine when they are old enough to brush their own teeth.

- i** Children don't need to use special children's toothpaste.
- i** Children of all ages can use family toothpaste, as long as it contains 1,350 to 1,500ppm fluoride.
- i** Children aged 3 and under who don't have tooth decay can use a children's toothpaste containing at least 1,000ppm fluoride.



Children under the age of 3 should use a smear of toothpaste.



Children aged over 3 should use a pea-sized blob of toothpaste.



Brush teeth twice a day last thing before you go to sleep and one other time during the day.



After brushing teeth for two minutes, spit out any excess toothpaste. There is no need to rinse your mouth out as the fluoride will stay on your teeth and help to protect them

Make toothbrushing fun; brush your own teeth at the same time, sing and play a song or listen to music.

## Drinks

It is recommended that your baby only has breast or formula milk until they are six months old.

Water and milk are the safest drinks for teeth. Sugary and fizzy drinks should be avoided as they can cause tooth decay.

Avoid adding sugar or honey to weaning foods or drinks.

### **0-6 months**

Feeding bottles should only be used for expressed milk, infant formula or cooled boiled water.

## 6-12 months

Drinks should be offered in a non-valved, free-flowing or angled cup rather than a beaker with a teat, as this helps your child develop the ability to sip.



## 12 months

Discourage feeding from a bottle.

# Foods

## Sugary food and drinks

Limit food and drinks containing sugar such as:

- ! biscuits, cakes
- ! fizzy drinks, fruit juices

Keep to mealtimes only.

## Hidden sugars

Many foods that are identified as healthy contain hidden sugars such as:

- ! dried fruit

- ! smoothies
- ! pasta sauces in jars

## Healthy snacks

Encourage snacks free of salt and added sugar such as:

- ✓ cheese
- ✓ fingers of toast
- ✓ fresh fruit and vegetables.

## Medicines

Ask your pharmacist if a sugar-free alternative is available.

## When to visit the dentist

Children should be taken to the dentist by their first birthday.

Use this **QR code** to find all Oxfordshire Community Dental Service leaflets. You can also access them in an accessible format.



# Accessibility

An accessible version of this leaflet can be found on our website: [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/cds](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/cds)

If you need the information in another language or format, please contact us.

## Get in touch

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## Feedback

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides advice and support to patients, families, and carers, helping to resolve any problems, concerns, or complaints you may have.

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