

Dummies and thumb sucking

All babies have a natural desire to suck especially in their early months. If your child is using a dummy make sure that it is an orthodontic type designed for their age and kept clean.

From the age of six-months start to limit your child's use of a dummy so that around the time of their first birthday they don't use it at all.

Extended use of dummies can harm the development of the mouth, teeth and affect speech. Thumb sucking is more difficult to control, but try to stop the habit.

If you have any concerns about your child's dental health or you need further advice please contact your dentist.

Help your child to get used to going to the dentist by letting them sit-in on your check-up. Their first proper appointment should take place no later than when they're three-years-old. They should then have a check-up at

least once a year. Treatment is free under the NHS for all children.

Key messages for healthy teeth

- Brush your baby's teeth twice a day with a smear of fluoride toothpaste
- Weaning foods should ideally be free from or low in added sugars
- Foods that contain added sugars should be kept to a minimum and limited to mealtimes
- Only give milk and water to drink
- Make sure you take your child to the dentist
- If your baby needs to take medicine, please ask for the sugar-free version

To find an NHS dentist in your area visit: www.nhs.uk and type 'find a dentist' in the search box.

For Further Information on oral health please refer to the 'Birth to Five' book or visit www.nhs.uk/livewell/dentalhealth

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This document is also available in other languages, large print, Braille, and audio format upon request. Please email communications.cnwl@nhs.net

We are now able to communicate with deaf or hard of hearing people via Text Relay. If you are making a call from a text phone dial 18001 + 01908 243568

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w formacie audio.
Polish

நீங்கள் கேட்டுக்கொண்டால், இந்த ஆவணம் வேறு மொழிகளிலும், பெரிய எழுத்து அச்சிலும் அல்லது ஒலிநாடா வடிவிலும் அளிக்கப்படும்.

Tamil

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Urdu

این مدرک همچنین بنا به درخواست به زبانهای دیگر، در چاپ درشت و در فرمت صوتی موجود است.

Farsi

Šį dokumentą paprašius taip pat galima gauti kitomis kalbomis, dideliu šriftu, Brailio raštu ir garso juostoje. Prašome kreiptis el.

Lithuanian

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Portuguese

Este documento también está disponible y puede solicitarse en otros idiomas, letra grande, braille y formato de audio.

Spanish

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে, ব্রেল এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধ পাওয়া যায়

Bengali

Dokumentigaan waxaa xitaa lagu heli karaa luqado kale, daabacad far waa-wayn, farta indhoolaha (Braille) iyo hab dhegaysi ah markii la soo codsado.

Somali

Настоящий документ по отдельному запросу можно получить в переводе на другие языки, напечатанным крупным шрифтом или на аудиокассете.

Russian

A guide to looking after your baby's teeth



For further information or advice on oral health please visit [Looking after your baby's teeth - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk).



Milk teeth

Milk teeth are very important because they affect appearance, help your child to talk, help them to eat a healthy diet and they hold the space for the adult teeth.

Research has shown that poor oral health can affect general health as it is linked to diabetes, strokes, heart disease, obesity, lung disease and dementia. So give your baby the best start by looking after their teeth.



Teething

A child's first tooth usually appears between the age of six and 12-months. Their first tooth is often one of the middle two front teeth on the lower jaw. Remember to complete the chart in your child's personal health record book when their first tooth appears. The last milk teeth should come through by the time they're three-years-old.

Teething may cause discomfort, excess dribbling and a red cheek on the affected side.

What can help with teething

- A cool teething ring or homeopathic teething granules
- Teething gel may be applied to the gum
- Sugar-free paracetamol or ibuprofen liquid medicine suitable for babies

If you are concerned about your baby's symptoms, please speak to your health visitor, pharmacist, doctor or NHS 111.



Tooth brushing

Tooth brushing should begin when the first tooth appears. Use an age appropriate brush, with a small head and soft bristles.

Brush twice a day - especially at bedtime because teeth need to be as clean as possible overnight to prevent decay.

Try to use a gentle circular motion and aim to make brushing fun. We recommend an app called 'Brush DJ' from www.brushdj.com

Always use fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride strengthens teeth and helps to protect them from decay.

Under the age of three, babies and children should use a paste with no less than 1000 parts per million (ppm) of fluoride.

It is best to use a mint flavoured toothpaste from the beginning as many sweet tasting pastes do not contain enough fluoride and they encourage your child to eat the toothpaste, which may be harmful.



Only use a smear of toothpaste, as most of it will be swallowed. The suggested amount is demonstrated in the picture below. Use a small smear when only a few teeth are present and gradually increase to using a pea sized amount when your child is over three-years-old and is able to spit the toothpaste out.

There is no need to rinse with water.



Tooth decay

Sugar + plaque bacteria
= acid = Decay.

The risk of tooth decay increases with how often your child's teeth come into contact with sugar.

It is best to limit foods and drinks containing sugar to main meals, this allows time between meals for saliva to help get rid of the acid which causes tooth decay and minimise the damage caused.

Avoid giving sweetened foods as snacks.

Instead we suggest small amounts of fresh fruit, raw vegetables, cheese, bread or crackers.

Although dried fruit and fruit juices can contribute towards 'five a day' be aware that in dried fruit the sugar has been changed in the drying process which makes it easier for the bacteria to use the sugar to cause tooth decay, so please keep dried fruits to mealtimes only. Fruit juice is also acidic so should only be given at mealtimes and diluted, one part fruit juice to 10 parts water.



Weaning

Weaning is not just about the change in diet from milk to solid food. It is also about learning to drink from a cup, to eat from a spoon, and to chew – all of which help to develop the muscles needed to talk clearly.

Cups and bottles

We recommend that your child should start to learn to drink from an open cup when they're six-months-old. This will help to develop the lip and tongue muscles needed for talking. Continued sucking from a bottle or spout may not help your baby to progress with their speech. By the age of one they should no longer use a bottle.

We recommend water or milk to drink and never give sweet or flavoured drinks at or before bedtime.

For safety, do not allow your child to walk around with a bottle or cup in their mouth.

