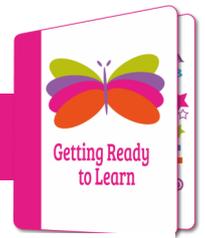


GETTING READY TO LEARN



“My smile is special—let’s keep it that way!”



Key Messages:

- ⇒ Tooth decay is the most common reason for hospital admissions for children.
- ⇒ Start good oral habits early. Teach your child to brush their teeth twice a day for about 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste.
- ⇒ Brush last thing at night before bed and at least on one other occasion.
- ⇒ Preschool children should use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. Use children’s fluoride toothpaste containing no less than 1,000 ppm of fluoride or family toothpaste containing between 1,350ppm and 1,500ppm fluoride.
- ⇒ Choose a brush with a small, soft head and change it every three months.
- ⇒ Brushing should be supervised by a parent or carer until the child is around seven years of age.
- ⇒ Don’t rinse out after brushing—as the fluoride toothpaste left behind will help protect the teeth.
- ⇒ It is recommended that children should visit the dentist as soon as their teeth start to emerge. Register your child with a dentist and visit regularly to ensure that teeth and gums are healthy.
- ⇒ Avoid sugary drinks and snacks. It is not the amount of sugar or acid in the diet, but how often it is eaten or drunk. The more often your child has sugary or acidic foods or drinks, the more likely they are to have decay. It is important to have sugary and acidic foods just at mealtimes.
- ⇒ Pre-schoolers should not use a dummy or bottle after the age of 12.

For more information visit www.child-smile.org.uk or www.nhs.uk

Tips To Try

- ⇒ Guide your child’s hand so they can feel the correct movement. Use a mirror to help you child see exactly where the brush is cleaning their teeth.
- ⇒ Make tooth brushing as fun as possible by using an egg timer/watch to encourage your child to brush for 2 minutes.
- ⇒ Use a sticker chart to reward good behaviour such as brushing their teeth for two minutes, twice a day
- ⇒ When visiting the dentist make the trip fun as this should prevent your child worrying about future visits.
- ⇒ Avoid lots of sugary sweets or drinks, instead aim to give healthy snacks such as fruit and raw vegetables. Try oranges, bananas pieces or cucumber, carrot sticks, toast, rice cakes and plain popcorn.
- ⇒ From the age of 12 months up to 2, children should only have full-fat milk. Semi-skimmed milk can be introduced from the age of 2, as long as your child is a good eater and growing well. Skimmed milk should be only given to children over 5 years of age.
- ⇒ Unsweetened juice and smoothies still contain sugar and acids so restrict your child to no more than 1 small class (about 150ml) of fruit juice or smoothie each day and only at mealtimes.
- ⇒ Sucking a dummy or thumb will encourage an open bite, which is when teeth move to make space for the dummy or thumb. This can affect a child’s speech development. Thumb sucking won’t cause permanent problems as long as the habit stops by the time your child gets their second teeth, but it can be a hard habit to break.
- ⇒ Never let your child run around with a toothbrush in their mouth, many serious accidents have occurred when a child has fallen and the toothbrush has pierced their throat.