

Tooth Brushing Tips for Parents

Your role as a parent includes keeping your child's teeth clean and healthy and free from tooth decay. It can be challenging to brush infants' and toddlers' teeth, but it's important to do since baby teeth are very susceptible to tooth decay.

Brushing your baby's teeth

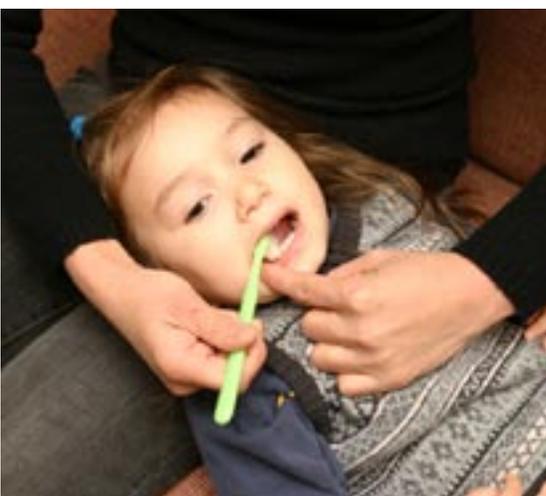
- Begin brushing your baby's teeth as soon as their first tooth appears.
- Use a soft, baby toothbrush with just a tiny dab of fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush twice a day; brushing before bed is especially important.
- Don't miss brushing where the teeth and gums meet!
- Lift your baby's lip regularly to check for white or brown spots on their teeth. Look closely along the gum line. Call your dentist if you notice anything unusual.
- Take your baby to see a dentist once their first tooth comes in or by their first birthday.



Placement of the baby for toothbrushing

Find a comfortable position. It is often easiest to brush your baby's teeth when the child is lying down. You will see better and do a better job. Try these positions:

- Lay your baby on a change table, making sure they cannot fall off.
- Place your baby on a couch or bed, with their head in your lap.
- Lay your baby on the floor with their head placed between your legs.



Cleaning your toddler's teeth

- Use a child-size toothbrush with soft bristles.
- Use a tiny dab of fluoride toothpaste; at age three, about the size of a small pea.
- Brush twice a day; brushing before bed is especially important.
- Brush the tongue, the top of the tooth and both sides of the tooth; remember to brush where the teeth and gums meet, too!
- Brush for at least two minutes.
- Gums that bleed need more brushing to make them healthy.
- Floss between teeth that are touching.
- Take your child to the dentist regularly when they reach one year of age.



Remember!

- Young children cannot clean their own teeth. Do it for them when they are very young; do it with them as they grow.
- Children under eight need you to start the brushing for them.
- Always use toothpaste with fluoride. Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel and helps prevent tooth decay.
- Encourage children to spit out toothpaste and keep it out of their reach.
- Discourage ongoing nibbling on foods and sipping on drinks between meals and snacks. This causes ongoing acid attacks on teeth, which can cause tooth decay, even tooth rot.
- Be a great role model: children want to brush their teeth when they see you brushing your own.



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