

Oral health: What to expect



Babies start to cut their first teeth, called milk teeth, around 6 months.

You may notice more dribbling than usual and/or pink/red cheeks. These could be signs of teething.

Babies and toddlers often have their bottom front teeth erupt first, followed by their top teeth.

Milk teeth will keep erupting until approx 3 years of age. At approx 6 years old the permanent teeth start to arrive.

From 6 months to 13 years, teeth will be coming and going.

When should I start brushing their teeth?

- You can begin brushing your baby's teeth before they erupt. Use a soft baby toothbrush (widely available at chemists/supermarkets).
- Brush twice a day, once before bedtime and one other time of day that's convenient for you (preferably after breakfast).
- Clean right to the back of the mouth, start at the front and work backwards.
- You should help brush your child's teeth until they are around 7 years old.
- Follow the curve of the mouth when brushing, don't brush straight back as this will cause your child to gag.



How much toothpaste should I use?

You don't need much toothpaste, just a smear for 0-3 year-olds. Babies and toddlers don't like the strong minty taste of adult toothpaste. Your baby or toddler can't spit just yet, so will swallow. This is ok and usual.

Diet and teeth go together

- 🕒 Sugar is the enemy of your teeth. Low sugar doesn't mean not harmful to teeth - any sugar is harmful.
- 🕒 It's better to have all your sugar in one go, rather than a little at a time. The more times you eat, the more times you coat your teeth in sugar.
- 🕒 Have consistent meal times and limited snacks (regular meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner). Toddlers need snacks in-between, so make them sugar-free.

Drinks

- 🕒 Start with water or milk. Keep other drinks for meal-times.
- 🕒 For night-time drinks, give water rather than milk, as milk leaves a sugar coating on your child's teeth.
- 🕒 Ditch the bottle and introduce a free flow cup from 6 months.





Things to know

- Keeping your child's milk teeth happy will help ensure they have healthy adult teeth.
- If your child has milk teeth removed, they are more likely to need orthodontic work such as braces later in life.



Contact and social media



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