

Safe drinks for teeth

Fresh milk and plain water are the only safe drinks to keep teeth healthy.



It is important to limit the number of fizzy drinks, juices, squashes and milkshakes your child has during the day and at night.

If your child is thirsty at bedtime or during the night, only give them plain water – not juice.

For further information about safe snacks and drinks, visit the Change4Life website: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

Visiting the dentist

Your child should visit the dentist to have regular check-ups. Take your child as often as the dentist recommends.

Sugar free medicines

Medicines that contain sugar can cause tooth decay.

Sugar free medicines are much kinder to teeth, especially if they need to be taken often during the day and at night.

Always ask for sugar free medicines for your child at the pharmacy or from your doctor.

Remember

- Brush teeth last thing at night and one other time during the day.
- Use family toothpaste with the correct amount of fluoride for your child's age.
- Reduce the amount of sugary foods and drinks given during the day and **keep them to mealtimes.**
- Drinks that contain acids, such as diet drinks and natural fruit juices, are harmful to teeth.
- Visit the dentist as often as they recommend.
- Always ask for sugar free medicines.

A list of local dental practitioners is available from: www.nhs.uk

For more information contact your Oral Health Improvement team.

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.

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Oral Health Improvement 0-19 Integrated Service

Oral health care for children



Tooth brushing

Teeth should be brushed as soon as they appear in the mouth. Forming this good habit from an early age is important for your child.

Choose a toothbrush with a small head with soft/medium textured bristles. Manual or electric toothbrushes can be used.

For children under three years of age, use a smear of ordinary family fluoride toothpaste.

0-3 years



For children over three years of age, use a pea-sized blob.

3+ years



To help protect teeth from tooth decay, children under three years of age should use toothpaste containing no less than 1000 parts per million (ppm) fluoride.

Children over three years of age should use toothpaste containing 1350 – 1500 ppm fluoride.

Children need help with tooth brushing up to the age of seven or eight years, as they often miss their back teeth.

Encourage your child to spit out the toothpaste after brushing and not to rinse their mouth. This will keep the fluoride on their teeth and protect them for longer.



Snacks

Eating sugary food and drinking sweet drinks during the day and at night can cause tooth decay.

Tooth decay can cause pain, infection and sleepless nights. Sometimes decayed teeth need to be taken out by the dentist.

Sweets, cakes, chocolate, biscuits, ice-cream and cereals bars have hidden sugars in them. It is important to limit the number of times your child has sugary snacks.

Sugar also has many different names, such as: glucose, sucrose, dextrose, maltose, syrup, glucose syrup.

Watch out for the hidden sugars!

It is better to keep sugary food and drinks to mealtimes, treat days or for special occasions.

Try swapping sugary snacks to fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, cheese, toast with sugar-free spread or plain rice cakes. These kinds of snacks are much better for teeth and health.



Dried fruits are very sticky and sugary and should be kept to mealtimes.

Drinks

All fruit juices, including fresh juice, squashes, fizzy drinks and milk shakes also contain hidden sugar and can damage your child's teeth.

Although sugar-free, no added sugar, low sugar and diet drinks have less sugar in them; they are very acidic and can harm teeth.

Children under four years of age should not have sugar free or diet drinks, as they contain artificial sweeteners and are not recommended for young children.

Watch out for artificial sweeteners such as; aspartame, saccharin and sorbitol.