

TOOTH TIPS

for parents, grandparents & carers



12-18
MONTHS

Eat Well



- Your child will love to eat with the family and share the family meal.
- Limit sweet sticky snacks containing honey or sugar to meal times. These include dried fruit, fruit bars / strips, muesli bars, sweet biscuits, lollies and chocolate.
- Offer healthy snacks between meal times such as **fresh** fruit pieces and yoghurt, cheese and dry biscuits, chopped vegetables and sandwiches.

Drink Well



- A bottle is not necessary after 12 months.
- Your child should be drinking from a cup (offer your child only plain full cream milk or water).
- Encourage your child to drink tap water every day (this provides the benefit of fluoride in some water supplies).
- It is best not to offer sweet drinks, including fruit juices / drinks, soft drinks and cordials (either home made or bought).

Mouth checks are suggested activities included in the 12 months, 18-21 months and 2 year old health assessments with the maternal and child health nurse. Consult your dental professional, maternal and health nurse, family doctor or paediatrician for further information.

Clean Well

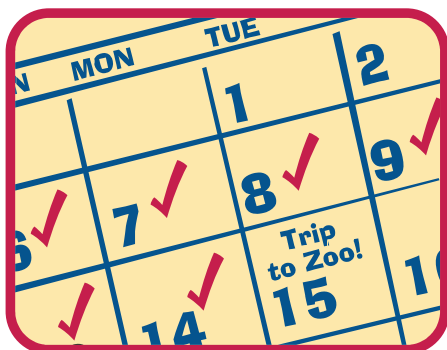


- Start to brush your child's teeth, using a soft toothbrush designed for children.
- Up to 18 months of age, brush your child's teeth with water only or a non-fluoridated toothpaste.
- Brush your child's teeth at least twice every day (after meals and before bed).
- Use a low fluoride children's toothpaste from 18 months to six years of age unless otherwise recommended by a dental professional.
- Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste smeared on the toothbrush bristles.

TOOTH TIPS

Thumb & Finger Sucking

Prevention



- Encourage your child not to suck his / her thumb and / or fingers.
- Support your child in the decision to stop sucking a thumb and / or fingers.
- Reward your child with a hug or praise, to reinforce their determination to stop the habit.
- As your child gets older you could use ticks or stars on a calendar for each period the child does not suck a thumb or fingers. After the successful period, reward your child with a treat such as a surprise outing, a toy or a special privilege.
- Encourage a bond with his / her favourite toy.
- Give your child a mitten to wear as a reminder not to suck.

Consult your dental professional, maternal and child health nurse, family doctor or paediatrician for further information.

Thumb & Finger Sucking

12-18 MONTHS



- Sucking on thumbs, fingers and toys is healthy and normal behaviour.
- Most children spontaneously stop sucking between two and four years of age.
- Thumb and finger sucking after four years of age can affect your child's appearance, speech and ability to bite.
- When permanent teeth start to erupt (6-7 years), sucking on thumbs, fingers and dummies may cause teeth to grow out of line.

Did you know?

- Too much milk (more than 600ml) may affect your toddler's appetite. He / she may feel full from milk and not want to eat.
- Children do not require any fruit juices or other sweet drinks to have a balanced and healthy diet.
- A handy snack idea is to keep a snack box in the fridge. The box should contain healthy foods such as pieces of fruit, vegetables, cheese and small sandwiches. This helps establish healthy snacking habits.
- Children are more likely to suck their thumb and / or fingers when they are tired, stressed, hungry or in a new or threatening environment.