

TOOTH TIPS

for parents, grandparents & carers



18-6
MONTHS YEARS

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.

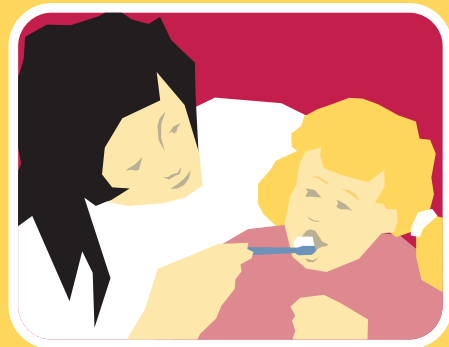
Drink Well



- A bottle is not necessary after 12 months.
- Your child should be drinking from a cup (offer your child water or plain milk - reduced fat milk is not suitable for children under 2).
- 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.
- 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.

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Dental Visits

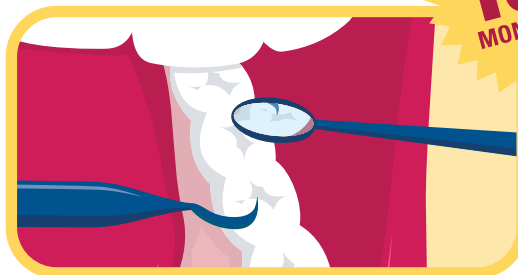
Toothbrushing

- Brush your child's teeth at least twice every day (after meals and before bed).
- Parents should assist children up to six or seven years of age to brush their teeth thoroughly.
- Sit your child on your lap facing away from you, or stand behind tall children, with their head tilted against your body so you can see all the teeth.
- Use a soft toothbrush designed for children. A low fluoride toothpaste is recommended for children aged 18 months to six years of age unless otherwise recommended by a dental professional.
- Aim the toothbrush bristles down at an angle to the gum line. Gently jiggle the brush or move it in small circles over the tooth and gums. Repeat for inside surfaces, using a light back and forth motion.
- Encourage your child to spit out the toothpaste after brushing but not rinse.

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

Dental Visits

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- Allow your child to accompany you when you visit the dentist. The dental professional may offer your child a ride in the dental chair for fun.
- Dental check-ups start with toddlers.
- Help children to accept that dental visits are part of a regular routine.
- Be positive about dental visits and highlight the new / interesting / fun aspects of visiting the dental professional.
- Make your child's appointment for early in the day so your child is not tired.
- Arrive before the appointment time to let your child become familiar with the new surroundings.
- Be a 'passive observer' and allow the dental staff to capture your child's full attention.
- It is not necessary to 'bribe' children to see the dentist / dental therapist, nor for parents to be anxious.

Did you know?

- It is best to avoid using lollies, sweet biscuits or chocolate as rewards for your child.
- A great idea for special rewards or treats is a choice from a treasure jar full of balloons, stickers, crayons and toys.
- The molars which erupt (come through) without replacing any baby teeth, at 6-7 years of age, are the first of your child's permanent (adult) teeth and last for life.
- 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.