

## Information for Parents and Guardians

# Looking after your child's teeth

## Eating and Drinking

- The frequency and amount of sugary food and drinks should be reduced.
- Sugary foods and drinks that can cause decay in teeth include:

- |                                      |               |                            |   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| • Sugary soft drinks and cordial     | • Fruit pies  | • Jams, preserves, honey   | • Milk-based beverages with added sugar |
| • Sweets/ chocolate confectionery    | • Puddings    | • Ice cream and sorbets    | • Dried fruits                          |
| • Cakes and biscuits, buns, pastries | • Table sugar | • Sugary breakfast cereals | • Syrups and sweet sauces               |

- Sugary drinks have **no place** in a child's **daily** diet but account for a surprisingly large proportion of the daily free sugar intake of both children and adults. Almost a third of free sugars consumed by 11-18 year olds are from soft drinks. Aim to swap sugary drinks for water, lower fat milk or sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee. Be sure to check the label for added sugar. For more information, visit: [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/sugars.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/sugars.aspx)
- From six months of age infants should be introduced to drinking from a free-flow cup and from age one year feeding from a bottle should be discouraged.
- Sugar **should not** be added to weaning foods or drinks.
- Sugar-free medicines should be recommended.

- Avoid food and drinks containing sugar at bedtime. At night the salivary flow (which helps to protect teeth) is reduced, therefore teeth are more susceptible to decay.

## Tooth brushing

- Parents/carers should brush or supervise tooth brushing until your child is age 8.
- As soon as teeth erupt in the mouth brush them twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste.
  - Brush last thing at night and on one other occasion.
    - (Brush gum line AND each tooth twice daily with a small toothbrush head, with a medium texture).
  - **Spit out** after brushing and **do not rinse**, this keeps the toothpaste on your child's teeth for longer and helps to prevent decay from developing.
    - Rinsing with water, mouthwashes or mouth rinses (including fluoride rinses) immediately after tooth brushing will wash away the concentrated fluoride in the remaining toothpaste, thus diluting it and reducing its preventive effects.
- Fluoridated toothpaste:
  - Use fluoridated toothpaste containing no less than 1,000 parts per million (ppm) of fluoride for children 0-6 years and no less than 1,350ppm fluoride from age 7 + unless otherwise stated by your dentist.
  - Children under 3 years should use no more than a smear of toothpaste (a thin film of paste covering less than three quarters of the brush) and must not be permitted to eat or lick toothpaste from the tube.
  - Children 3-6 should use a pea sized amount.
- Disclosing tablets can help indicate areas that are being missed when brushing.
- Children over 7 years old can use a fluoride mouth rinse daily at a different time to brushing to reduce risk of developing decay.

## Go to your Dentist

- Go to your dentist for regular check-ups. Your dentist will assess how often your child needs a review based on their oral needs.
- For fluoride varnish (this is a sticky paste that is easily smeared onto your child's teeth to minimise the risk of dental decay).

## If you have any concerns

If you experience any problems or have any worries or concerns, please telephone the Department of Child Dental Health on telephone number (0161) 393 7732 between the hours of 09.00 and 17.00 Monday- Friday.

Outside these hours please contact your child's dentist or your local A& E department.