



Hello to all our lovely families!

Hope you are all well and keeping safe during these challenging times.

My name is Anne, I'm an Early Years Practitioner and I facilitate our Stay & Play sessions.



Each week we have been looking at ways to stay in touch with you via our Facebook page and website, bringing you activities and information so that we all feel connected. This week we will be sharing tips and information about teething and brushing first teeth. Your baby's first teeth may be small and temporary, but they're important, as they act as placeholders for their adult teeth. Without a healthy set of baby teeth, your child will have trouble chewing and speaking clearly. That's why caring for your baby's first teeth and keeping them decay-free is so important.

We hope you find it useful.

How do I know if my baby is Teething & what age does teething start?

When will my baby start teething

Some babies are born with their first teeth. Others start teething before they are 4 months old, and some after 12 months. But most babies start teething at around 6 months.

How can I tell my baby is teething?

Baby teeth sometimes emerge with no pain or discomfort at all. At other times, you may notice:

- your baby's gum is sore and red where the tooth is coming through
- one cheek is flushed
- they are rubbing their ear
- your baby is dribbling more than usual
- they are gnawing and chewing on things a lot
- they are more fretful than usual

Some people think that teething causes other symptoms, such as diarrhoea and fever, but there's no evidence to support this.

When will baby finish teething?

Most children will have all of their milk teeth by the time they are 2 1/2 years old.





Looking after your baby's first teeth

From their very first tooth, your baby will benefit from proper dental care and oral hygiene. Your baby's first teeth may only be temporary, but it's important to take good care of them now and to establish good oral hygiene habits early. This will help them to develop a lifetime of good dental health. Poor oral health such as tooth decay or lost baby teeth can interfere with good nutrition and speech development.



When do I start brushing my baby's teeth?

You can start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as they start to come through. Don't worry if you don't manage to brush much at first. The important thing is to get your baby used to brushing their teeth as part of their daily routine. Letting your baby see you brushing your own teeth will set a good example.

How do I brush my baby's teeth?

The easiest way to brush a baby's teeth is to sit them on your knee, with their head resting against your chest. With older children stand behind them and tilt their head backwards. Cleaning and brushing teeth will remove plaque (the build-up on teeth) that causes tooth decay.

- You can start cleaning your baby's teeth by wiping with a soft cloth or brushing with a small soft toothbrush and water.
- At 18 months old, start using a pea sized amount of low-fluoride toothpaste to brush your child's teeth.
- Encourage your child to spit out toothpaste after brushing, but not rinse.
- Clean all surfaces of the teeth and gums twice a day (after breakfast and before bed).
- Children will need an adult to help them brush their teeth until about 7 or 8 years of age.



Teething remedies

Teething can be incredibly uncomfortable and distressing for everyone involved. It can make your baby irritable, fussy and restless at the best of times. If you are struggling to relieve the pain it pays to get creative. Chill teething rings in the fridge. Make breastmilk or formula ice lollies. Stock up on a variety of safe things to chew. Sometimes the best teething remedies for babies are based on distraction. Playing and **cuddling** baby can move their focus away from the discomfort long enough to give them (and you) some relief.

Try a change of scene.

Move baby to another room or go for a walk.

Run a bath and bring out the bath time toys.



Healthy food and drink and your baby's first teeth

Children can begin to eat solid foods from around 6 months of age. Many common foods and snacks have sugar in them, it is advisable to check the packaging and labels on foods to check the sugar content. Eating foods with high levels of sugar causes tooth decay.



Plain milk is a healthy drink choice

Babies under 12 months should be drinking breastmilk or infant formula. Milk is a good source of calcium which makes teeth strong and healthy. Children over 12 months can drink plain full fat cow's milk. After 2 years of age, low fat milk is suitable. Remember that flavoured milks can have added sugar in them and this can cause tooth decay.

Don't put your baby to sleep with a bottle

When babies fall asleep with a bottle some milk stays in the mouth and on the teeth. This can cause tooth decay.

Once your baby has finished feeding remove the baby from the breast or bottle.

If your child has a night time feed, remember to:

- Always take them out of their cot to feed them.
- Always hold them when feeding them with a bottle.
- Avoid leaving your baby to feed from a bottle without supervision as they may fall asleep with the bottle still in their mouth, increasing the risk of choking, ear infection and tooth decay.



Babies don't need fruit juice or sweet drinks

- Fruit juice and sweet drinks are not necessary or recommended for children under 12 months as they can cause tooth decay.
- Fruit juice with 'no added sugar' contains natural sugar which can also cause tooth decay.
- Sweet drinks include: soft drinks, fruit juice, sports drinks, cordials, tea drinks, fruit drinks and energy drinks.
- Diet soft drinks contain acids which can also damage teeth





When do I take my baby to the dentist?

NHS dental treatment for children is free. Take your child with you when you go for your own dental appointments so they get used to visiting the dentist.

Your child's first dental visit should take place after that first tooth appears, but no later than the first birthday. As soon as your baby has teeth, he or she can get cavities.

Being proactive about your child's dental health today can help keep his or her smile healthy for life.

For more information contact NHS England on 0300 311 22 33 or email england.contactus@nhs.net or <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/looking-after-your-infants-teeth/>

