

Tips for Brushing Your Baby's Teeth!

By Dr Laura Hunter-Shaw

As a mum of two children, I have realised that nobody really tells you how to start to care for your baby's teeth - and how difficult it can be! Here are a few tips that I have learnt over the years which have made things slightly easier for us!

Start as soon as their first tooth arrives
Decay can occur in a tooth as soon as it comes through. Brush twice a day, every day! Getting a toothbrush with some toothpaste on it in the mouth is essential for routine and getting them used to it!

Have a routine
Do it at the same points in the day, every day! Last thing before bed and in the morning (it doesn't really matter whether it's before breakfast or after breakfast but be consistent).

Get a brush they can hold
One with a chunky handle works great as they can grasp it better. If it is too fiddly, they will just drop it, and it makes getting them to engage more difficult!

Start with a children's mild mint toothpaste
Use a flat smear of fluoride toothpaste (with at least 1000ppm fluoride) until they are three years of age.

Brush your teeth at the same time
Babies love to copy. If you are brushing your teeth, they are much more likely going to want to brush theirs! If they want to, let them have a go at brushing your teeth too - fair's fair!

Sit behind them
It's a much easier angle and as if you are brushing your own teeth. It is more comfortable and it is safer if they try to throw their head back or wriggle off your knee (we've all been there)!

Persevere
No baby likes having their teeth brushed initially. They cry, they scream, they wriggle. But all of a sudden, one day they will just let you do it. The quicker you make it a routine and normal, the easier you will find getting them to do it as they get older - I hope!!

All parents and guardians are advised to ensure that young children in their care are taken to see a dentist as soon as their first teeth come through, and before their first birthday so they become familiar with the experience.



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