



Information and Checklist

It's important to teach your child how to keep their teeth healthy. Here are some helpful tips:

KEEP YOUR CHILD'S TEETH CLEAN.

- If your child is three or younger, brush their teeth yourself.
- When they are between the ages of three and six, help your child brush their teeth twice a day.
- Use a pea-sized drop of fluoridated toothpaste for your child age three to six. Fluoride helps to strengthen the tooth enamel. Make sure your child does not swallow the toothpaste.
- When your child's teeth start touching, floss between them at least once a day. Many cavities start between teeth.
- Bacteria that cause cavities can be passed on to your child. Anything that has been in your mouth should not be put in your child's mouth.

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO SEE A DENTIST AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR.

- Take your child to see a dentist by 12 months of age or within six months of them getting their first tooth. Cavities found early can be fixed more easily and cheaply, and only a dentist can perform a complete dental exam, make a diagnosis of tooth decay or other dental disease and prescribe treatment options.
- If possible, bring your child with you when you visit the dentist for your own appointment. This can help your child to feel more at ease when it is time for their first appointment.

KEEPING CHILDREN'S TEETH HEALTHY

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TALK TO YOUR DENTIST OR DENTAL HYGIENIST ABOUT:

- the best way to brush your child's teeth,
- the use of toothpaste,
- the best way to floss your child's teeth, and
- how to get affordable dental care in your region.

CHECK YOUR CHILD'S TEETH.

- Look for dull white spots or lines on the teeth. These may be at the base of the teeth next to the gums. Dark teeth are also a sign of tooth decay. Make an appointment with a dentist right away if you see these signs.

OFFER HEALTHY DRINKS.

- Offer only water between meals and snacks.
- Milk or fortified milk alternatives can be offered with meals or snacks. Offer small servings (125 mL or 4 oz.) in an open cup (not a sippy cup). Children only need 500 mL or 16 oz. of milk or milk substitute per day.
- Avoid or limit juice (125–175 mL or 4–6 oz. per day for a four- to six-year-old). If offering juice, only offer it in an open cup when they are having a snack or a meal.
- Try to avoid fruit punch, pop and sports drinks. They can wear off the enamel on teeth.

OFFER HEALTHY SNACKS.

- Give your child healthy snacks that include two of the four food groups. Some examples include cheese, apples, carrot sticks, whole grain pita bread or bean dip.
- Avoid giving your child too many sugary, sticky snacks. They can wear off the enamel on teeth.
- Keep snacks and meals two-and-a-half to three-hours apart.
- Avoid constant snacking throughout the day.
- Canada's Food Guide** can help you make healthy food choices.

Adapted with permission from the Best Start Resource Centre.

Visit cmascanada.ca/cnc/parents for more multilingual parent information



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