

Brushing Tips & Helpful Hints

When to brush

Brushing should be done by your child at least twice a day

Do not use a toothpaste with fluoride until your child can spit into the sink

Re-brush your child's teeth ("check" their brushing) at least once a day, preferably at bedtime

Once brushed, nothing but water before bed

How to brush

You will see better, and your child will tolerate having his/her teeth brushed if you do not use toothpaste. Think of it as less commotion in their mouth.

Once your child can spit in the sink, they should use toothpaste whenever they brush.

Use a routine so you get everything brushed thoroughly,

We tell our patients and parents "cheek side, tongue side, and chewing side; front and back; top and bottom".

As you brush, think of yourself gently massaging your child's gums with the toothbrush

We advise brushing back to front so your child is not poked with the toothbrush when they tighten their cheeks (and they all will!)

Why brush

Bacteria, which make acid from sugars in your diet, attach to teeth in a sticky substance called plaque

The longer plaque "matures", the more acid making bacteria it contains

Brushing cleans away this plaque, resetting its maturity

Like sweeping a floor, it is only cleaned off when the brush passes across it

- It is important to brush in a routine, so no teeth are missed

Children often get decay at the gumline, so massaging the gums is important

Night-time is the most important time to remove the bacteria

- Saliva levels, the body's defence against cavities, are very low at night

Helpful tips

Do not put your child to bed with a bottle

Beware of sippy cups containing anything but water

- Do not let your child carry cup around for long periods

Do not overuse a pacifier

- Leave it out once child spits it out
- Never put honey or sweets on pacifier

Never give sweets, juice, or soda before bedtime

Give healthy snacks between meals, with occasional "treats"

Juices and sweets will not damage teeth when taken with meals

Always chew sugar free gum over sugar gum

- Sugar free gum does not feed the bacteria
- It will stimulate saliva flow, the body's defence against cavities