

# Preventing Tooth Decay in Children and Young Adults

## Information for parents and carers



Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust: delivering excellence  
in dental care across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Suffolk

## Guidelines for Preventing Tooth Decay in Children

### Ages 0 to 3 years

- From six months of age infants should be introduced to drinking from a cup
- From one year feeding from a bottle should be discouraged
- Sugar should not be added to weaning foods
- If a bottle is available while sleeping it should only have water: never milk / juice
- Parents should do the brushing: from age 3 help & supervise as the child learns
- As soon as teeth come through, brush them twice a day
- Use only a smear of toothpaste with at least 1,000 ppm fluoride\*
- The frequency and amount of sugary food and drinks should be reduced
- Frequent feeding increases tooth decay
- Sugars should not be consumed more than four times per day
- Remember: some natural foods (fruit juice, raisins, honey etc) are high in sugar
- Medications, where possible, should be sugar-free

### Ages 3 to 6 years

- All of the above points, plus
- Brushing should always be supervised by an adult



## All Children and Young Adults

- Brush for two full minutes, twice a day (use a timer to check), every day
  - Brush after breakfast and last thing at night
  - Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with 1,350 to 1,500 ppm fluoride\*
  - After brushing, spit out, and do not rinse with water or mouthwash
  - The frequency and amount of sugary food and drinks should be reduced, and when consumed, limited to mealtimes
  - Frequent snacking causes more tooth decay
  - Replace sugary snacks and drinks with non-processed, low sugar foods
  - Avoid fizzy drinks (even sugar-free ones) Replace them with water
  - Sugars should not be consumed more than four times per day
  - Remember: some natural foods (fruit juice, raisins, honey etc) are high in sugar
  - Where needed, medications should be sugar-free
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- \*ppm = 'parts per million', and is the concentration of fluoride in toothpastes. It is printed on the label of every tube
  - Low fluoride "children's" toothpastes (500ppm) are discouraged - unless a child is eating a substantial amount of toothpaste
  - In general, the more fluoride on the teeth each day, the better for preventing tooth decay
  - Where indicated, your dentist may give a prescription for a toothpaste with a higher level of fluoride
  - Where indicated, we will take X-Rays to check for hidden decay
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- **Have a check up with your dentist at least every six months**



**when it's less  
urgent than 999**

## For further information about this service contact:

**Cambridge City** - Brookfields Health Centre, Seymour Street, Cambridge CB1 3DQ - Tel: 01223 723 100

**East Cambs/Fenland** - 1-4 Church Mews, Wisbech, PE13 1HL -  
Tel: 0800 952 0870

**Ely** - Princess of Wales Hospital, Lynn Road, Ely, CB6 1DN - Tel: 01353 652 100

**Huntingdon** - Treatment Centre, Hinchingbrooke Hospital, Huntingdon PE29 6NT - Tel: 01480 363 760

**Peterborough** - 5 Midgate, Peterborough PE1 1TN - Tel: 0800 952 0870



If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: [ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net).

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.