

Children's teeth

LEARNING OUTCOMES



- To understand how to look after your children's teeth
- To be aware of how eating and drinking habits can affect children's oral health
- To know when you should start taking your child to visit the dentist

RESOURCES

- Flip chart and pens
- Copies of Resources 1–11
- Cards for matching made from Resource 9a, 9b, 9c

RELATED TOPICS

Taking care of your mouth and teeth (Theme 6 Topic 1)

Visiting the dentist (Theme 6 Topic 3)

Healthy food and drink (Theme 1)

HEALTH SKILLS

Dental extractions are one of the most common reasons for anaesthesia in under 5s and tooth decay is now a leading cause of parents seeking medical help and advice.

Understanding the importance of children's oral health from a very young age and getting into good habits early can set a pattern for future good habits and wellbeing as children grow up.

Knowing how to look after our teeth and prevent mouth disease is a key part of promoting our health and wellbeing more generally and the earlier we start, the better.

Related health information

NHS website: www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/
Colgate 'Bright Smiles Bright Futures'

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Understanding the importance of developing good oral health habits early on can help provide learners with the motivation they need to learn about the best way to look after their children's teeth and oral health from birth onwards.

To have the best chance of being able to look after their children's teeth effectively, learners need to know:

- How and when teeth develop;
- When and how to start brushing children's teeth;
- When to start visiting the dentist;
- The effects of different food and drink on children's teeth;
- Other factors that may affect the development of health teeth in children.

Functional Skills/Core Curriculum

Activities in this topic will contribute to learning in the following curriculum area:

- locate information from written text
English L1.14 (**L**Rt/L1.5)
- understand specialist key words **English** E3.8 (**L**Rw/E3.1)
- listen for and identify relevant information and new information from discussions, explanations and presentations **English** E3.1 (**L**Slr/E3.3)
English L1.1 (**L**Slr/L1.1)
- use strategies to clarify and confirm understanding **English** E3.3 (**E**Lr/E3.4a)
- scan texts to locate information **English** E3.9 (**L**Rt/E3.7)

- Ask the learners when their baby started teething? How did they know? What were the signs and symptoms e.g. crying, rosy cheeks, rash, dribbling, restlessness etc Did they ask anyone for advice about teething?
- Ask the learners 'how should you look after your children's teeth?' Ask how it is the same as looking after your own teeth and how it is different.
- Ask the learners what rules they have in their house around tooth brushing. How long do they brush? What toothpaste do they use?
- Ask the learners to come up with a list of food and drink which may cause harm to their children's teeth. Ask whether they know any of the 'rules' around food and drink and children's healthy teeth.

ACTIVITY 1

Teeth and teething

- Ask the learners who have had children, if they can remember which tooth came first, which next? Were they at the top or bottom? Front, sides or back?
- Give out copies of Resource 1 and talk through the usual order of first teeth. Make sure the learners can pronounce the names of each type of tooth and can point to them on the diagram as you say them.
- Ask the learners in pairs to answer the questions at the bottom of Resource 1 to check they have understood the diagram. Go through the answers together as a group.
- Ask the learners how they would know if their baby is teething. What sort of symptoms might they see? Use the present continuous form of verbs to put together a list on the flip chart. This might include: your baby's gum is sore and red where the tooth is coming through, one cheek is flushed, your baby is dribbling more than usual, they are gnawing and chewing on things a lot, they are sucking on their fingers, they are putting things in their mouth, 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).

Support

- You might like to read out the questions to the whole group before asking them to answer them in pairs.
- It may be helpful to look at the baby's age in terms of years, as well as in months to make sure learners understand. For example, 24 months is 2 years.
- When discussing teething, ask the learners what might be happening with their baby right now in this moment to bring out the present continuous form of the verbs. Write them up on the flip chart.

ESOL

- Learners might need extra help with the 'teeth-related' vocabulary, before they start to answer the questions.
- You might like to give some examples of the present continuous form of verbs before the discussion starts. Talk about what the learners are doing right now, at this moment in time and record on the flip chart. Generally, this form of the verb ends in '-ing' although there are exceptions. It is something which is happening right now.

ACTIVITY 2

Understand how to clean your child's teeth

- Explain that a regular teeth-cleaning routine is essential for children's good dental health. Give out copies of Resource 3 and encourage the learners to work in pairs to fill in the missing words.
- Go through the answers all together as a group to make sure that they understand what type of toothpaste to use for children.
- Talk through the tips provided on Resource 4 about brushing children's teeth.
- Ask the learners how they might help their children, even when very young, to brush their own teeth. Write the answers on the flip chart. Give out copies of Resource 5. Read through the tips provided and encourage the learners to fill in more of their own in the box provided at the bottom of the page.
- Give out Resource 6, as an information source to summarise what they have just learnt.
- Give out copies of the Wordsearch on Resource 7. You might like to prepare this activity by listing some words on the flipchart that are to do with looking after children's teeth. Words go backwards and forwards, but not diagonally.

Support

- You might like to read out the words in the box on Resource 3 together as a whole group before the learners do the activity.
- As there is some reading involved on Resource 3, you might like to make sure there is a more confident reader in each pair.
- You might like to give learners a list of words to search for in the Wordsearch on Resource 7.

ESOL

- Before learners try the activity, check if there are any unfamiliar words that may prevent them from completing it.
- You might need to give more information about how the Wordsearch on Resource 7 works. It might be helpful to provide a list of words to search for on the grid, but only those written forwards in the normal way.

ACTIVITY 3

Taking your child to the dentist

- Look at the cartoon on Resource 8. Ask the learners if anyone has had any experience of taking a young child to the dentist and what this was like.
- Ask if anyone knows when you should start taking a child to visit the dentist.
- Talk through the points on Resource 8 and offer the learners the opportunity to ask any questions.

Support

Encourage the learners to discuss their dentist experiences in pairs before sharing with the whole group.

ESOL

Check for any unfamiliar vocabulary within Resource 8 and discuss.

ACTIVITY 4

Know how eating and drinking habits can affect children's tooth health

- Ask the learners to work in pairs or small groups. Give each pair/group a set of picture cards made up from Resource 9a and questions made up from 9b and see if they can match them. Explain that these questions are all about how eating and drinking habits can affect children's teeth.
- Go through and check that the groups have the correct matches.
- Give out the description cards made up from Resource 9c. Ask the learners to make the responses to the questions. Most of the questions have more than one response.
- Go through the questions and responses together as a whole group and give the learners the opportunity to ask any questions.

Support

- You might like to check that the learners know what the pictures (9a) are representing and read through the questions (9b) before they start the activity.
- You might like to go through the description (9c) before starting the activity to check understanding.
- The last part of the activity could be done a whole group.

ESOL

- Go through each picture (9a) before you start the activity and get the learners to describe what is in each picture. You might like to write the vocabulary for each picture on the flip chart for reference.
- Check that the learners understand the meaning of the questions (9b) and descriptions (9c). It might be helpful to make sure there is a confident or fluent English speaker in each pair if possible.

ACTIVITY 5

Bottles, cup, dummies and thumbs

- Give out copies of Resource 10 and talk through with the learners.

Support

Encourage the learners to look at Resource 10 in pairs and prepare any questions they may have for the whole group.

ESOL

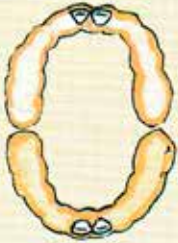
Check for any unfamiliar vocabulary within Resource 10 and discuss.

Action

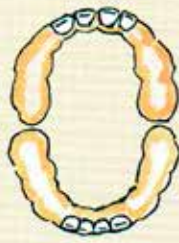
- Encourage learners to take away Resource 2 and complete it every time their child has a new tooth.
- Make a poster for new parents to help them recognise the signs and symptoms of teething.
- Encourage the learners to find some information and leaflets about caring for their children's teeth from a variety of sources.
- Make a leaflet advising parents about food and drink and their children's teeth using all the key information they have learned.
- Give out Resource 11 the leaflet which advises on all aspects of how to look after children's teeth and encourage the learners to read it.

Usual order of first teeth

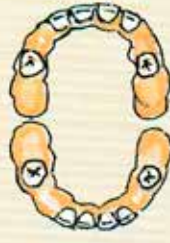
Front incisors
6–7 months



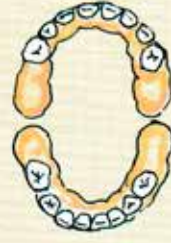
Side incisors
8 months



Pre-molars
10–14 months



Canine teeth
16–20 months



More molars
24–30 months



6 months



12 months

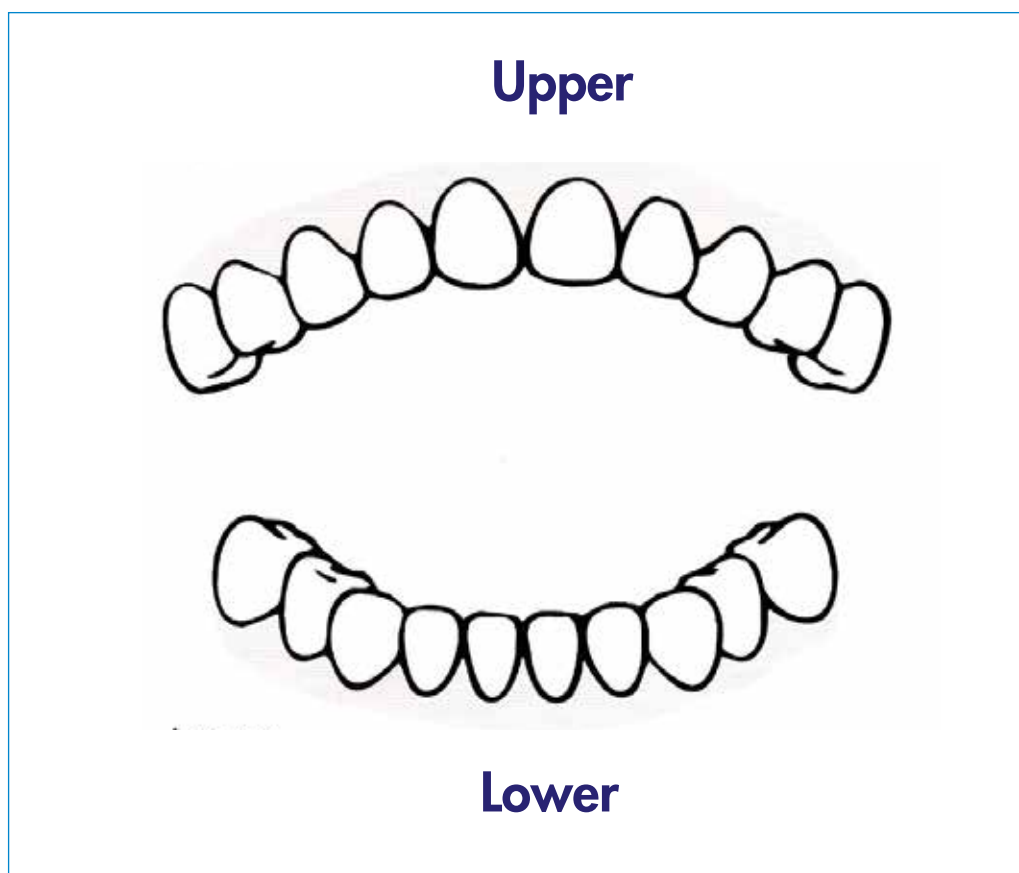


36 months

- 1 What age does a child start teething on average? _____
- 2 How many teeth usually appear by 16–20 months? _____
- 3 Which type of teeth usually appear second? _____
- 4 How many teeth will a child usually have at 7 months? _____
- 5 What are the fourth type of teeth to appear? _____
- 6 Where are they found in the mouth? _____
- 7 How many more teeth will a child usually have at 20 months than at 8 months?

- 8 At what age should most of the child's baby teeth have come through?

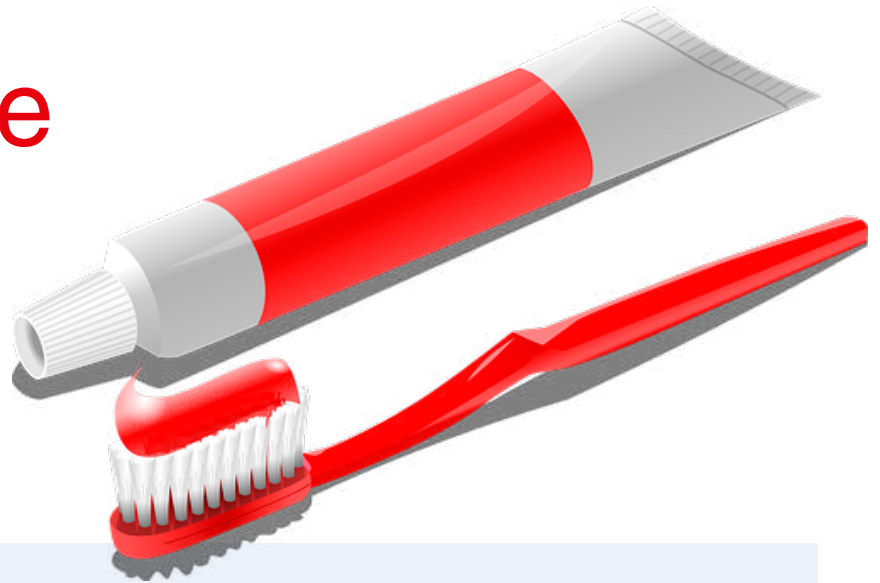
Your baby's mouth and teeth



Each time a new tooth shows, match it to the picture and write the baby's age in months.

Your dentist will complete this record each time you visit.

Toothpaste tips



*Fill in the missing words from the box below to find out seven good tips about what toothpaste you should use for your children's teeth.
(Cross out each word when you have used it)*

- 1 Start _____ your baby's teeth with fluoride toothpaste as soon as the first _____ tooth comes through. This is usually at around _____ months, but it can be earlier or later. It's important to use a _____ paste, as this helps to prevent teeth going bad (tooth decay).
- 2 There's no need to buy _____ 'children's toothpaste' brands. In fact, some of them don't have enough fluoride in them to help prevent tooth decay.
- 3 Children from the age of seven can use _____ toothpaste, as long as it contains 1,350–1,500 parts per million (ppm) fluoride. Check the toothpaste _____ if you're not sure or ask your _____.
- 4 Children up to the age of six who don't have tooth _____ can use a _____ toothpaste, but make sure it contains at least 1,000ppm fluoride.
- 5 Make sure children don't _____ or _____ toothpaste from the tube.
- 6 Below the age of _____ years, _____ should use just a smear of toothpaste.
- 7 Children aged three to six should use a _____-sized _____ of toothpaste.

blob brushing children decay dentist eat family fluoride lick
lower-strength milk packet pea six special three

Toothbrushing tips

Start brushing your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste as soon as the first milk tooth comes through. This is usually at around six months, but it can be earlier or later.


Brush your child's teeth for about two minutes twice a day: once just before bedtime and at least one other time during the day.



Encourage them to spit out the toothpaste, but not to rinse with lots of water. Rinsing with water after tooth brushing will wash away the fluoride so it won't work as well.

Supervise tooth brushing until your child is seven or eight years old, either by brushing their teeth yourself or, if they brush their own teeth, by watching how they do it. From the age of seven or eight, they should be able to brush their own teeth, but it's still a good idea to watch them now and again to make sure they brush properly and for about two minutes.

How to help children brush their teeth properly



Guide your child's hand so they can feel the correct movement.

Use a mirror to help your child see exactly where the brush is cleaning their teeth.

Make tooth brushing as fun as possible by using an egg timer, toy, song or app to time it for about two minutes.

Don't let children run around with a toothbrush in their mouth, as they may have an accident and hurt themselves.

Any more ideas?

Caring for your child's teeth



Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.



Avoid giving fruit juices or sweet drinks to children under five. Give milk or water instead and keep drinking times short.

BRUSHING TEETH

- 👉 Baby's teeth need to be cleaned at least once a day as soon as there is some tooth showing. As whole teeth appear, make it twice a day.
- 👉 Brush with a gentle circular movement.
- 👉 Toddlers can start to clean their own teeth, but you must still finish off for them.
- 👉 Clean your teeth at the same time to show how important it is.



Images taken from Family Health: Module 4 – Early Childcare

Wordsearch



Find as many words as you can within the grid to do with looking after your child's teeth

Q	D	A	L	B	R	E	E	H	K	D	C	V	U	T	G	D	S	H	K
T	Y	N	N	D	E	I	N	D	N	D	S	T	J	C	J	O	O	P	K
B	F	D	T	E	N	H	Y	E	D	I	R	O	U	L	F	I	T	I	T
R	B	E	G	H	V	G	A	C	H	H	M	O	S	E	T	L	W	F	U
U	J	N	Y	E	N	I	N	A	C	U	R	T	Q	A	W	J	I	F	Y
S	U	T	E	O	S	C	O	Y	S	Z	P	H	F	N	Z	H	C	D	W
H	I	I	O	E	D	S	Z	V	L	D	U	P	E	B	E	U	E	V	B
I	V	S	D	H	P	V	C	D	Z	B	H	A	A	D	B	S	A	P	N
N	D	T	Z	T	O	O	T	H	B	R	U	S	H	E	C	C	D	O	A
G	C	E	V	S	C	L	E	A	S	P	H	T	A	U	O	L	A	B	D
R	K	E	D	O	Z	D	A	D	P	D	T	E	E	T	H	X	Y	I	A
I	L	K	P	C	B	L	O	B	P	S	V	U	O	D	L	S	B	N	K
O	I	L	C	S	O	O	L	H	E	D	S	E	S	J	E	D	E	C	L
C	M	I	V	E	P	V	D	U	O	R	I	N	S	E	L	B	A	I	W
N	M	M	O	L	A	R	A	D	C	S	O	D	O	H	S	D	H	S	G
T	H	W	Y	N	O	E	S	C	E	M	I	T	D	E	B	A	A	O	S
W	W	R	T	W	O	M	I	N	U	T	E	S	E	E	T	Y	N	R	X
Q	X	R	A	H	N	R	I	M	K	I	L	R	E	F	G	J	U	L	A

Taking your child to the dentist



Some people worry when they go to the dentist.



But there is nothing to worry about if you look after teeth.



Everyone will be smiling.

NHS dental care for children is free.

Take your child to the dentist when their first milk teeth appear. This is so they become familiar with the surgery and get to know the dentist.

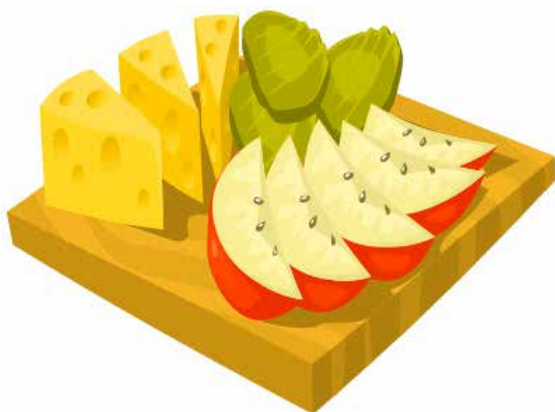
The dentist can help prevent teeth going bad (tooth decay) and pick up any problems at an early stage. Just opening up the child's mouth for the dentist to take a look at is useful practice for the future.

When you visit the dentist, be positive about it and make the trip fun. This will stop your child worrying about future visits.

Take your child for regular dental check-ups as advised by the dentist.

Images taken from Family Health: Module 4 – Early Childcare

Know how eating and drinking habits can affect children's tooth health



1. Can I let my child have sweets?

2. What are the best snacks to give my child?

3. Should I let my child have fizzy drinks?

4. What are the best drinks for my child's teeth?

5. Is it OK to drink fruit juice or smoothies?

6. Will milk at bedtime damage my child's teeth?

7. Are sugar-free medicines better for my child's teeth?

e. Most children want sweets, but you can help to prevent problems by making sure they have them just as a treat.	h. Don't let them have many or have them very often, and never before bed.
p. Try not to give sweets or sweet drinks as rewards.	f. The best snacks are fruit and raw vegetables.
j. Dried fruit is high in sugar and can be bad for teeth, so only ever give it to children with meals – for instance, as a pudding – and never as a snack between meals.	m. Try tangerines, bananas, pieces of cucumber or carrot sticks. Other good snacks include toast, rice cakes and plain popcorn.
i. No. Fizzy drinks can contain large amounts of sugar, which will increase the risk of tooth decay.	o. Fizzy drinks (both those containing sugar and sugar-free or 'diet' versions) also contain acids that can wear away the outer surface of the tooth.
l. The best drinks for children over one year old are plain still water or plain milk.	q. Your child should have full-fat milk (whole milk) from the age of 12 months to two years.
b. Semi-skimmed milk can be given from the age of two, as long as your child is a good eater and growing well for their age.	t. Skimmed milk can be given to children aged five and over.
a. Cow's milk is not suitable as a drink for babies under 12 months of age.	k. Try to avoid giving babies fruit-flavoured 'baby juices', and never give them in feeding bottles.
d. Even unsweetened juices and smoothies contain sugars and acids, so although they can contribute towards their 5 a day restrict your child to no more than one small glass (about 150ml) of fruit juice or smoothie each day and only at mealtimes.	n. Also, be aware that unsweetened 100% fruit juice, vegetable juice and smoothies can only ever count as a maximum of one portion of their 5a day. For example, if they have two glasses of fruit juice and a smoothie in one day, that still only counts as one portion.
g. If your child is thirsty, it's better to give them water than to encourage a taste for sweet drinks.	r. Fruit juice should not be given to babies under six months.
s. Water is the best drink to give at bedtime, but if you do give milk, don't add anything to it. Chocolate-flavoured drinks and milkshake powder usually contain sugars, which will increase the risk of decay.	u. Teeth are at most risk at night because there is less saliva in the mouth to protect them.
	c. Yes. Always ask if a sugar-free medicine is available and remind your doctor about this if you're being given a prescription for your child. This is especially important if your child is taking long-term medication.

When should my child give up bottles?



Your child should begin moving off the bottle and on to a free-flow feeder cup at six months. Try to get them off bottles completely by the age of one, because the teats and spouts encourage children to suck for long periods of time, meaning the drinks that cause tooth decay stay in contact with your child's teeth for a long time.

Are sippy cups good for teeth?

There's no need for a child to use a sippy cup. They're similar to a bottle in that they require the child to suck to make them work. A free-flow feeder cup is better, as it doesn't have valves and the liquid can flow. This means that children learn to drink normally rather than by sucking.



Will a dummy or thumb sucking harm my child's teeth?



No, but they will encourage an open bite, which is when teeth move to make space for the dummy or thumb. They may also affect speech development. That's why you should avoid using dummies after 12 months of age.

Thumb sucking won't cause long lasting problems, as long as the habit stops by the time your child gets their second teeth, but it can be a hard habit to break. Discourage your children from talking or making sounds with their thumb or a dummy in their mouth, and don't dip dummies in anything sweet, such as sugar or jam.

1 LIMIT SNACKS

Limit the number and amount of sugary foods and drinks to help prevent tooth decay.

Why is this important?

Everyone has plaque bacteria in their mouth. When plaque bacteria mixes with sugary foods and drinks, acids are produced which can cause tooth decay. Every time your child eats sugary foods or drinks, they increase their risk of tooth decay. That's why your child should limit the amount and number of times they consume sugary snacks or drinks each day.



Tooth Defender Tips

- Have your child help choose nutritious snacks like fresh fruits, vegetables and bread. These are better choices for healthy teeth *and* bodies. Try a family taste test to see which fruits and veggies are your child's favourites!
- Encourage your child to drink water or plain milk

2 BRUSH TEETH

Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, always before bedtime and on one other occasion.

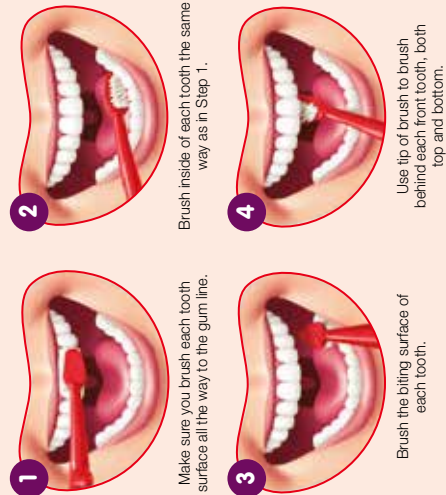
Why is this important?

Toothbrushing removes plaque from the surfaces of the teeth and fluoride keeps teeth strong and helps fight tooth decay.

Tooth Defender Tips

- Treat toothbrushing as a routine, and lead by example
- Just spit after toothbrushing, rinsing washes the fluoride protection away
- Use an age appropriate toothpaste with fluoride
- For children up to 3 years of age, use a smear of fluoride toothpaste
- For children 3-6 years of age, use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste
- Replace your toothbrush regularly
- A new toothpaste technology is available, which in addition to fluoride contains Colgate's new Sugar Acid Neutraliser™ technology. Colgate Maximum Cavity Protection plus Sugar Acid Neutraliser™ toothpaste fights sugar acids in plaque before they harm your teeth

Supervise and assist your child's toothbrushing until they are at least 7 years old. Showing them how to systematically clean all tooth surfaces, leading by example.



3 REGULAR CHECK-UPS

Have regular dental check-ups.

Why is this important?

It will help your child become familiar with the dental environment, and you will be able to get important information and advice.

Children should start visiting the dentist from birth. Ask for advice on how to look after their teeth, and get further information about toothbrushes, toothpastes and preventive treatments available.



Tooth Defender Tips

- Make dental check-ups a fun habit for your child. Consider establishing a post-check-up routine, like an invigorating outdoor activity or a trip to the library to choose a special book
- Remember: you are an important role model for helping to prevent a fear of going to the dentist. Talk to your child about how great healthy teeth look and feel!

There are no audio scripts for this topic.

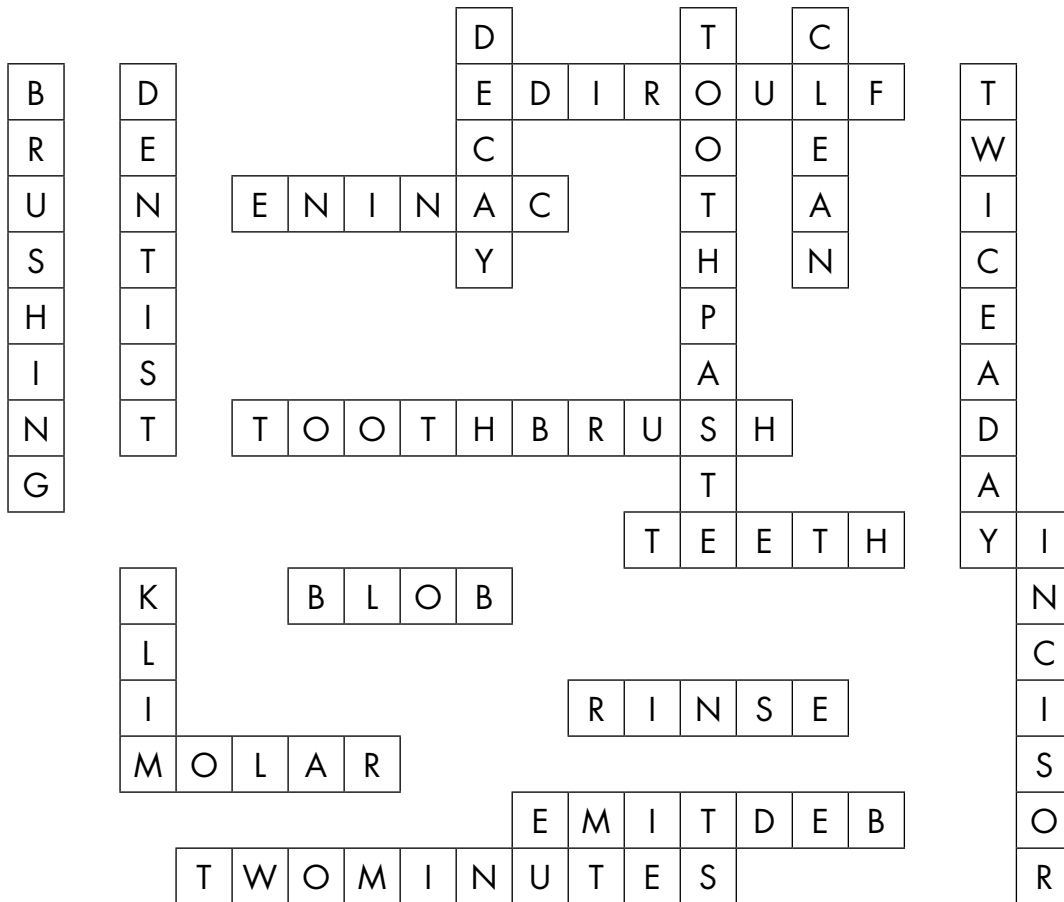
ACTIVITY 1 / Resource 1

1. 6 months
2. 16 teeth
3. Side incisors
4. 4 teeth
5. Canine teeth
6. Next to the side incisors/between the side incisors and the pre-molars
7. 8 more teeth
8. 24–30 months (2–2 ½ years)

ACTIVITY 2 / Resource 3

1. Start **brushing** your baby's teeth with fluoride toothpaste as soon as the first **milk** tooth comes through. This is usually at around **six** months, but it can be earlier or later. It's important to use a **fluoride** paste, as this helps to prevent teeth going bad (tooth decay).
2. There's no need to buy **special** 'children's toothpaste' brands. In fact, some of them don't have enough fluoride in them to help prevent tooth decay.
3. Children from the age of seven can use **family** toothpaste, as long as it contains 1,350–1,500 parts per million (ppm) fluoride. Check the toothpaste **packet** if you're not sure or ask your **dentist**
4. Children up to the age of six who don't have tooth **decay** can use a lower-strength toothpaste, but make sure it contains at least 1,000ppm **fluoride**.
5. Make sure children don't **eat** or **lick** toothpaste from the tube.
6. Below the age of **three** years, **children** should use just a smear of toothpaste.
7. Children aged three to six should use a **pea-sized blob** of toothpaste.

ACTIVITY 2 / Resource 7



ACTIVITY 4 / Resource 9

- Question 1 – e, h, p
- Question 2 – f, j, m
- Question 3 – i, o
- Question 4 – l, q, b, t, a
- Question 5 – d, n, g, k, r
- Question 6 – u, s
- Question 7 – c