

# Oral Health Information for Parents of Preschool Children



**Introduce teeth brushing as early as possible and attempt to do it twice daily for two minutes each time. Try to make it part of your child's daily routine.**

- Use a smear of fluoride toothpaste for children under three and a pea sized amount for children aged three to six years. The toothpaste should contain no less than 1,000ppm of fluoride.
- Encourage your child to spit out after brushing. Avoid rinsing as the fluoride will not work.
- Make brushing fun! There are songs or apps to use (such as Brush DJ, as recommended by Dr Ranj), or even an egg timer. You could choose a brush with your child's favourite character on it or go somewhere your child is comfortable and brush their teeth there.
- Be a model tooth brusher! Your children will feel more at ease if they see you doing it too. You may need to brush for them but you can also let them experiment with brushing themselves, preferably in front of the mirror.
- There is a wide variety of toothbrushes on offer; from the standard brushes to ones you put over your finger, to three sided brushes for quickness or electric brushes.
- There is also a huge variety of different toothpastes! From flavoured to flavourless to powders (all with a range of textures), so if your child doesn't like one you can experiment with another.
- If your child is not keen to brush their teeth, consider why. Is it sensory related? Is the brush too hard, is it the taste or texture of the toothpaste, is it a stressful time? Sometimes something as simple as not liking the grip on the handle or being in the bathroom is enough to cause upset.



## Going to the Dentist

- Register your child with a free NHS dentist as soon as possible; regular visits support your child to become familiar with the environment. It may take many visits before your child is comfortable enough to allow the dentist to get close enough to look in their mouth.
- Don't be afraid to tell the dentist what may be helpful for your child. For example: sitting on your lap, using their own water bottle to rinse or having a favourite song playing on your device.
- If the routine dentist isn't working for your child ask to be referred to the specialist dental service.
- Prepare your child for visits to the dentist using social stories, looking at pictures online and by talking them through what will happen. Reassure them that it's a positive experience and that you will be with them. For example, on the day of the visit you could use a 'first & then' board so they have something to look forward to afterwards, such as playing on the swing or using an i-pad.



*Remember, it's never too late to start a tooth brushing routine! Oral health is vital, and prevention is key to avoid cavities which could cause pain and further problems in the future.*