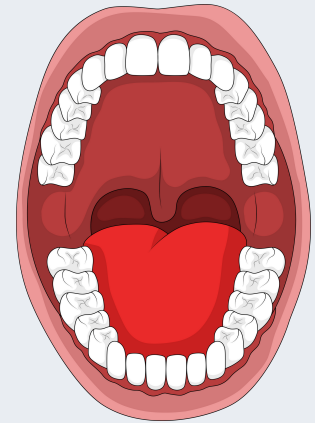


## Oral Health

Caring for your child's teeth starts from birth, whilst they may not have teeth outside of their gums yet, they are ready and waiting to start the teething process around 5 or 6 months. Having a good routine from as early as possible will aid your child in being comfortable and confident in caring for their own teeth. You should help your child to brush their teeth twice a day, NHS guidance currently recommends once at the end of the day and one other time during the day so make it work for you and your child.

It's never too late to start a tooth brushing routine at home, involve your child in why they need to do this and work with them on what they are comfortable with, especially if they have sensory processing difficulties. Make sure you think about: what does the brush feel like in their hand, could the bristles be too hard or soft, does an electric or sonic brush vibrate too much (can you adjust the power or start with a manual), is this the right time of day for you and your child or are you rushing to get to your next task.



In our centres children are offered toothbrushes to build their confidence in this routine. We start by just introducing a brush alongside a song, they can touch and feel the brush and sing along if they wish, they could brush the teeth of a toy or doll along to the song, or they may feel they can put the brush into their mouth and follow the brushing instructions in the song. This process is entirely driven by the child at their pace so that after continuous exposure we start to see their confidence grow in taking the next step in progressing their skills. Once children are familiar with the brushing process we will offer a smear of toothpaste as the next step.



## 5 Top Tips for Oral Hygiene

1. Establish a tooth brushing routine
2. Register with a dentist as soon as possible (NHS dental care for children is free), your child may want to watch you before they are ready to sit in the chair
3. Reduce intake of sugary foods, including squash or juice to drink
4. Use open top cups or beakers with soft mouth pieces or straws
5. Read books about teeth and tooth brushing such as "The selfish crocodile" by Faustin Charles or "Let's brush our teeth" by Campbell Books

## 5 Top Tips for Tooth Brushing



1. Let your child choose their brush (they may want their favourite character on it!)
2. Make toothbrushing fun with a song or fun timer
3. Tooth brushing doesn't have to happen in the bathroom, be somewhere your child is comfortable
4. NHS recommends toothpaste with no less than 1000ppm of fluoride
5. Be a model brusher and let your child see you brushing your teeth