



Oral Health for Kids

Dental Health Information Series



How to Brush

Sounds like a 'no brainer' but you'd be surprised how often kids (and adults!) get this one wrong.

Did you know that it takes two to three minutes to properly brush your teeth but most people only spend 30 seconds or less.

So why is it so important? Germs. Millions of them live on our teeth, tongue and gums and feed on the food that's left behind after we've eaten. A by-product of these bacteria is acid, which is what attacks and destroys our tooth enamel leading to a filling.

The solution? Brushing. It removes the bacteria so they can't make the acid that destroys our teeth. To remove bacteria from all our teeth takes two to three minutes. Don't be too rough. It takes very little pressure to remove bacteria and food so make sure your kids don't get too over-zealous with their brushing.

Teach Your Child to Brush

- Brush twice a day - after breakfast and before bedtime. If they can, brush after lunch or after sweet snacks.
- Use a pea-sized blob of toothpaste (you don't need much).
- Use a fluoride toothpaste either a normal one or a low fluoride one for younger kids under 6 years of age. Why is fluoride important?
- Get your child to gently brush the inner surface of their teeth back and forth using short circular motions. Then move to the outer surface and then the chewing surface on top. Make sure they pay particular attention to where the tooth meets the gum as this is where plaque builds up.
- Use the tip of the brush to clean behind each front tooth – both top and bottom.

- Remind your child not to be too rough. It takes very little pressure to remove bacteria and food and too much pressure can harm the gums.
- Encourage your child to spit out toothpaste after brushing but don't rinse.
- Spend two to three minutes brushing. If it's difficult to keep track of time use an egg timer or play a favourite song.
- Use toothpaste under adult supervision and keep out of reach of children to avoid children eating the toothpaste.



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For more information on oral health and looking after your mouth, visit www.dentalhealthweek.com.au

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