



Tiny teeth!

A five-minute guide to healthy teeth for the under fives

Toothy tips for tiny tots

A happy child with a sunny smile is what every parent wants to see.

Good teeth help your child feel confident but tooth decay can cause pain and worry, even in small children.

When it comes to children's teeth, regular brushing and visits to the dentist are important.

What, when and how your child eats and drinks is also important and this booklet gives simple facts on how you can keep your little ones grinning from ear to ear.

It's a toddle!



First steps

Tooth decay (also known as dental caries) is caused when the bacteria in our mouth turn sugars left behind after eating and drinking into acid. This causes damage to the teeth, leading to decay.

You can help protect small children's teeth in 3 simple steps

1. Keep sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes
2. Brush teeth and gums twice a day for at least 2 minutes with a fluoride toothpaste
3. Register with a dentist and visit regularly; the sooner the better! Children are treated free under the NHS

Reducing sugar in your child's diet will help prevent tooth decay; it's how often that it's served which is particularly important.

The more often we eat and drink sugary things the more acid is produced and the more damage is caused to tiny teeth. Sweet drinks in a bottle, particularly at bedtime, or sweets like lollipops will damage teeth because the sugar will be in contact with the teeth for a long time.



Erosion explosion

Sugar is not the only issue for dental health. Acidic foods and drinks can also be a big problem for tiny teeth by wearing away the surface of the tooth.

Fizzy drinks, fruit juices and squashes are often the acid culprits in the erosion explosion, even the sugar-free or diet varieties.

To help avoid tooth erosion, don't offer children too many acidic drinks and keep them to mealtimes rather than between meals.

Only offer water or milk (breast milk or formula to infants) between meals – these are good choices for tiny teeth.

It is best to give tiny tots water or milk to drink at mealtimes too. However, you can offer diluted pure fruit juice with meals from 6 months, but make sure it's in a cup, not a bottle. This makes it less likely to cause tooth erosion.

Fizzy drinks should be avoided. Squashes and other soft drinks are not recommended for babies and toddlers. If you choose to give these to your child make sure they are:

- **well-diluted**
- **drunk from a cup**
- **drunk at mealtimes**
- **never given in a bottle or at bedtime.**

If they are thirsty at bedtime or during the night offer water, and avoid giving your child juices or sugary foods or drinks.

Remember, the more often tots eat and drink sugary and acidic foods the more damage is caused to tiny teeth.



Toothpaste power!

Take care of tiny teeth

For a sweet smile, brush teeth twice a day for at least 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste* and discourage a sweet tooth.

Start to brush your baby's teeth as soon as they begin to come through. Parents should continue to brush tiny teeth or supervise brushing until at least seven years of age.



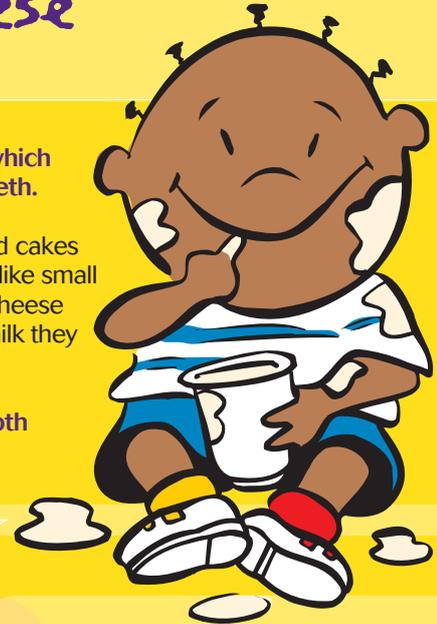
* see page 18

Say cheese

Milk provides calcium which is needed for strong teeth.

Try swapping biscuits and cakes for tooth-friendly snacks like small cubes or sticks of hard cheese and plain yogurt – like milk they also have calcium.

Sweet snacks mean tooth decay attacks!



Look out for secret sugar

Sugar comes in many different disguises. It can be labelled in a different way so as well as sugar, look out for sucrose, fructose, glucose, maltose, dextrose, honey and syrups, and concentrated fruit juice.

Smiles of snack ideas



Peeled and chopped fruit and vegetables

Plain yogurt with added fruit

Crumpets, toast fingers and cheese spread

Homemade plain popcorn

Chapatti, pitta bread, potato cakes, matzos and rice cakes

Plain biscuits like water biscuits and cream crackers

A stick of cheese

Bites for growing mites

Milky goodness

As well as providing calcium which is needed for strong teeth and bones, milk provides much more.

189ml milk (about a third of a pint) is packed with nutrients providing:

Iodine for children's growth

Phosphorus for energy release

Protein for bone development

Potassium for nerve function

Vitamin B2 for healthy skin and vision

Vitamin B12 for red blood cells.



From 6 months you can use whole cows' milk in cooking or mix small amounts into cereal, and you can also give foods made from whole milk like yogurt, fromage frais and cheese. From 12 months whole cows' milk is suitable as the main drink, but not before this time.

From age 2 years onwards you can start introducing semi-skimmed milk if your child is eating a variety of foods and growing well. Otherwise stick to whole milk. 1% fat or skimmed milk are not suitable for under 5s.



Family recipes

with milky, cheesy or yogurty ingredients

Easy Peasy Bolognese

- 1** tablespoon olive oil
- 1** onion, peeled and diced
- 1** garlic clove, crushed
- 1** carrot, peeled and diced
- 1** pepper, deseeded and diced
- 1** teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 400g** lean minced beef
- 120ml** milk
- 2 x 400g** chopped tomatoes
- 300g** mini pasta shapes
- 15g** freshly grated Cheddar or Parmesan, to serve

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, carrot, pepper and dried herbs, and fry for about 8 minutes, until softened. Add the minced beef and cook until browned, stirring to break it up. Add the milk and tomatoes and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat and simmer with the lid on for 30 minutes. If the sauce is still too juicy take the lid off and cook for longer.

Cook the pasta according to packet instructions and serve with the Bolognese sauce and some Cheddar or Parmesan cheese grated on top.

Easy, cheesy tuna and potato bake

350g potatoes, washed and cut into similar sized pieces

25g butter

25g flour

1 can of tuna (185g), drained

285ml (½ pint) milk

1 large leek, washed and chopped

1 red pepper, washed and chopped

90g Lancashire or other white cheese

Preheat the oven to 200°C or gas mark 6. Parboil the potatoes leaving the skins on, and cut into thin wedges. Melt the butter in a pan; add the chopped leeks and pepper, and cook until just soft. Stir in the flour, cook for 1 minute, add the milk gradually, whisk continuously and heat gently until the sauce begins to thicken. Add the tuna and turn into an ovenproof dish. Arrange the potato wedges on the top and grate or crumble the cheese over. Bake for 20 minutes until the cheese is golden brown.

Cheese & pineapple sticks

15-20g of cheese

1 large slice of fresh pineapple - cut into pieces

Cocktail sticks

Add 2 pieces of pineapple to the stick and 1 piece of cheese, add another 2 pieces of pineapple. Repeat until ingredients are finished.

Yogurt and strawberries

80-100g of natural unsweetened yogurt
7 fresh strawberries chopped

Place yogurt in a bowl and add chopped strawberries.



Banilla whizz

1 large ripe banana, sliced

**1 small pot (approx 150g)
thick and creamy vanilla yogurt**

450ml (¾ pint) milk

Reserve two pieces of banana for decoration, then put the remainder into a blender or food processor with the yogurt and milk. Blend for 10-15 seconds until smooth.

Pour into two glasses and decorate with the reserved banana.

Tasty tip

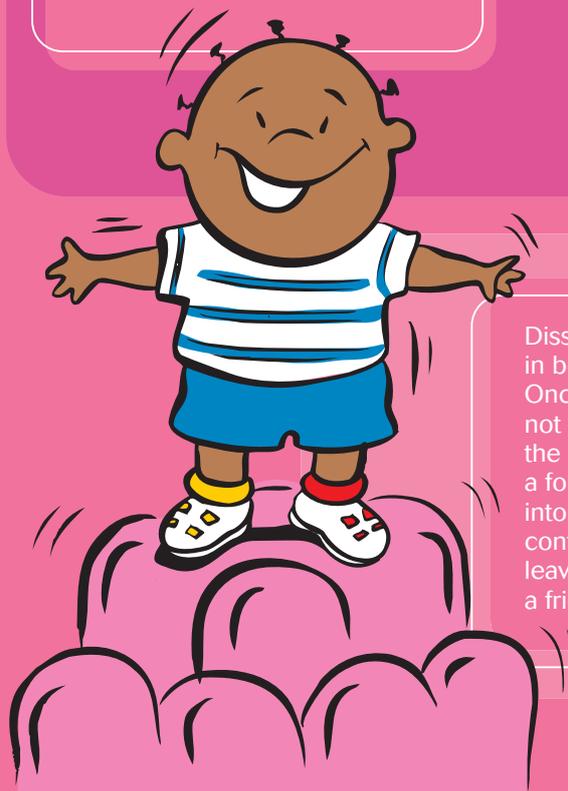
If you can't find vanilla yogurt, use natural yogurt and add 1-2 drops of vanilla extract to the blender with the other ingredients.

Milky wobble

1 pack of jelly (135g)

125ml boiling water

250ml whole milk



Dissolve the jelly in boiling water. Once cooled but not set, whisk in the milk using a fork. Pour into a mould or container and leave to set in a fridge.

Your questions answered

My child loves dried fruit. Is it OK to give this as a snack?

Dried fruit is nutritious but should be eaten with a meal and not as a snack. The natural sugars in dried fruit can cause tooth decay. Eating dried fruit at mealtimes makes damage to tiny teeth less likely.



I've heard bottles are bad for teeth. When should I stop giving my baby a bottle?

It's fine to use a bottle until your baby is six months, however never leave your baby on its own with a bottle or when asleep as it could cause choking. It's a good idea to introduce a free-flow lidded beaker rather than a bottle from about six months onwards. Once your baby is one you should stop giving a bottle with a teat. Teats can damage teeth (especially if used to give sweetened drinks). It's best not to put anything in a bottle other than expressed breast milk, formula or water. As soon as your child is ready, encourage them to use an open cup.

Should I stop giving my child fruit juice?

Babies under 6 months shouldn't be given fruit juice; government guidelines encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. Pure unsweetened fruit juice can be given to your child after 6 months and provides vitamin C. Just restrict it to mealtimes and make sure it's well diluted. Also check the label, as some ready-to-drink fruit drinks are mostly water and sugar.

I think my child's allergic to cows' milk. Should I change to a soya drink?

Allergy to cows' milk is not as common as people think, affecting about 1 in 50 infants, but it is much less common in older children (most have outgrown their allergy by the time they start school). Always get advice from a Registered dietitian (through your GP) before excluding cows' milk.

Soya products should only be used if advised by a dietitian or GP, as children who are allergic to cows' milk may also be allergic to these. If you do give soya-based drinks it is important to choose one with added calcium, and remember that some soya-based drinks contain added sugars, which are not good for teeth.

Are sugar-free squashes safe to give my toddler between meals?

Diet, reduced-sugar or no added sugar drinks can encourage a sweet tooth and usually contain artificial sweeteners which are not recommended for toddlers. Your toddler should avoid all soft drinks such as fizzy drinks and squashes even if sugar-free. These drinks can still contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value.

Is it OK to give my child tea or coffee?

Giving tea or coffee to young children reduces their absorption of iron and is not recommended. They also contain caffeine which is a stimulant and can disturb children's sleep.

My child keeps asking for sweets and fizzy drinks! What can I do?

Sweets and fizzy drinks can harm your child's teeth, as well as taking away their appetite for more nutritious foods. It's not advisable to give fizzy drinks to toddlers. It's OK to give your toddler sweets occasionally, but try not to offer them regularly so that your child won't expect them and you'll avoid tantrums. If you do let your child have sweets it's best to give them all at once, at the end of a meal, as this is less harmful for their tiny teeth. Also have plenty of alternative snacks available.

What type of toothpaste is best for young children?

For children under three years you can use a smear of family toothpaste containing at least 1,000ppm (parts per million) fluoride; for children aged three to six years a pea-sized blob is needed containing 1,350-1,500ppm fluoride. Check the toothpaste packet for this information or ask your dentist. Always supervise toothpaste use and help your child brush their teeth until at least seven years old. Also make sure they don't eat toothpaste from the tube! Your dentist can also give you advice on whether your child would benefit from extra protection such as fluoride varnishes.

My child makes it difficult for me to brush his teeth. What can I do?

When it comes to tooth brushing, it is best to start young – as soon as your baby's teeth appear. Make it a fun part of your child's morning and bedtime routines – sing songs while you brush and use different coloured or cartoon-themed toothbrushes.

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For details on additional information sources please contact The Dairy Council



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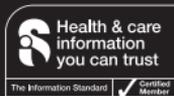
The
Dairy Council

Tel 020 7025 0569
info@dairycouncil.org.uk

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