

TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY TEETH

- ☺ Brush teeth twice a day especially last thing at night with a fluoride toothpaste (use 1000ppm fluoride toothpaste for under 3 years of age and 1450ppm for over 3 years of age).
- ☺ For under 3 years of age a smear of toothpaste is all that is needed and for over 3 years of age use a small pea-sized blob of toothpaste.
- ☺ Brushing is more effective with a small-headed toothbrush with medium-textured bristles. Toothbrushes should be replaced after three months or earlier if bristles become worn or splayed.
- ☺ Spit out excess toothpaste – **don't rinse out after brushing.**
- ☺ To help protect teeth against decay, sugary foods and drinks should only be taken at meal times.
- ☺ Children should be registered with a dentist as soon as the first tooth appears in the mouth.
- ☺ Everyone should visit the dentist at least once a year for a check-up. Children may need to go more often.

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Happy
Smiles
PROGRAMME

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PROGRAMME

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*Promoting the
Oral Health
of Pre-School
Children*



**Promoting
the oral
health of
pre-school
children**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to the Happy Smiles Dental Health Programme which has been developed by the Oral Health teams in Northern Ireland to encourage healthy lifestyle behaviours early in childhood that could last a lifetime!

The three main elements of the Happy Smiles Programme are:

- 1. Supervised daily tooth brushing – “Happy Smiles Tooth brushing Programme”. Children have the opportunity to brush their teeth in their pre-school facility.*
- 2. Healthy break time snack - Happy Smiles-Healthy Snacks! Children will learn the benefits of eating healthy snacks and will be encouraged to eat at least one portion of fresh fruit/vegetables per day.*
- 3. Happy Smiles Education programme. The education programme teaches children about the main causes of tooth decay and what they can do to prevent it. By the end of the year children should know that a) they should brush their teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste b) they should make healthy choices for between meal snacks and drinks c) they should visit the dentist for regular dental check-ups.*

Evidence shows that brushing teeth twice a day with the recommended fluoride toothpaste will help protect teeth against tooth decay. We encourage you to ensure your child’s teeth are brushed at least twice a day, especially last thing at night. Children need to be helped or supervised by an adult when brushing until at least 7 years of age.

It is important to reduce both the amount and frequency of foods and drinks that contain sugar. The more often these are taken each day, the more likely the teeth are to decay. You can also help by making sure that sugary foods and drinks are only eaten at mealtimes and where possible snacks/drinks taken between meals should be low in sugar, salt and fat.

