

# Oral health for babies to 3 years



You can speak to your GP, dentist or 0-19 Public Health Nurse (health visitor) if you have any concerns about your child's oral health.

**0-19**

**Public Health Integrated  
Nursing Service**

## How should I brush my child's teeth?

- Start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as the first tooth breaks through (usually at around 6 months).
- Try brushing your baby's teeth standing or sitting behind your child, cradling their chin in your hand so you can reach their teeth more easily.
- Use a smear of family fluoride toothpaste containing no less than 1000ppm fluoride.
- Brush last thing at night before bed and on one other occasion.
- Brush in small circles. Brush the fronts, backs and tops of each tooth. Don't forget the gums.
- It is best not to rinse or drink after brushing as it washes away the protective layer of fluoride.



## How should I be feeding my baby?

- Breast milk is the best food for babies, and it is recommended that you just give your baby breast milk during the first six months of their life.
- At six months old, babies can start eating some solid foods. It is best to start with savoury food.
- Water and milk are the best drink for teeth!
- Limit sugary snacks as this can cause damage to teeth.
- Most babies will suffer from teething pain. They may have a high temperature and red and warm cheeks. There are teething gels and liquids available to help reduce teething pain.



### Top tips

- Switch from a bottle to a free flow baby cup from 6 months old.
- Avoid using a dummy after 12 months as it may move the teeth into a position which can affect speech development and the position of the teeth growing in.
- Register with the dentist and visit as soon as their first tooth comes through. **NHS dental care is free for children!**