

dental care for children



This discipline focuses on growth and development, causes and prevention of disease, child psychology and management and all aspects of the highly-specialised paediatric restorative techniques and modalities.

It is essential for dental professionals to establish trust and confidence with their child patients. These dental specialists must use different communication styles than those used with adult patients in order to engage the child when teaching preventative dental habits and do so in a way that makes dental visits more enjoyable. It is important for dentists to teach children about preventing tooth decay as this can lead to impaired school performance and poor social relationships. A dentist should give advice about how to make teeth strong, the importance of healthy eating habits and other ways to prevent disease from occurring.

It is recommended that a dental visit should occur within six months after the presence of the first tooth or by a child's first birthday. It is important to establish a regular dentist for a child. This is because early oral examination aids in the detection of the early stages of tooth decay. Early detection is essential to maintain oral health, modify aberrant habits and treat them as simply as possible.

Parents should also be given advice on preventative home care including brushing, flossing and fluorides and information on finger and thumb sucking habits. Dentists should also cover ways of preventing injuries to the mouth and teeth, give information on diet, counselling and growth and development to ensure all children have the opportunity to establish healthy teeth.

NO FILLINGS PLEASE, I'M ONLY A KID!

The importance of cleaning my teeth was drummed in to me at a very young age. No matter how much I moaned and fidgeted (which I did, every single time) my mother always made sure I'd cleaned my teeth thoroughly – and thank goodness she did! I was the lucky one, some of my friends needed their first fillings at 10 years old, and nowadays we hear of children as young as 7 requiring fillings and astoundingly children who require them in their baby teeth. So how has it come to this?

The mass production of processed fast foods, huge selection of sweets and fizzy energy drinks available has definitely had an impact. Our children can so readily find these tooth rotting foods it can often be difficult to stop them, do we ban pocket money altogether? Maybe we need to focus on cleaning the teeth as much as we focus on moaning that they shouldn't eat so many sugary foods.

As my own mother painstakingly sat down every morning and every night with not just me but my two other siblings, who were as equally displeased at having their teeth meticulously cleaned, we need to do the same with our children. When we grow older it becomes second nature, so start their routine from the first tooth, they'll thank you when they grow up.

TOP TIPS FOR CLEANING YOUR CHILDREN'S TEETH

1. Make sure they brush their teeth twice a day after breakfast and dinner.
2. Supervise them when they're brushing, even when they're old enough to do it themselves pop your head round the door to make sure they are doing a good enough job!
3. Brush for at least two minutes using circular movements concentrating on each tooth – try counting the teeth to them as they brush.
4. Buy a fun toothbrush. You'll find lots of gimmicky brushes with their favourite action hero or Barbie on – make it fun!
5. Fluoride – ensure you use a low fluoride paste when they are very young and increase the fluoride content as they get older.
6. Children's toothpaste doesn't have to be mint flavoured they may prefer a tropical or strawberry flavour.
7. Use a fluoride mouthwash to strengthen the enamel on their teeth.