



CHILDREN'S
**HEART
SURGERY
FUND**



DENTAL CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH CHD

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS



Contents

- 3 Baby teeth
- 4-5 Tooth decay
- 6 What is Infective Endocarditis?
- 7 Infective Endocarditis symptoms
- 8 How does Endocarditis occur?
- 9 Oral health and CHD
- 10-11 Looking after your child's teeth
- 12 Healthy eating
- 13 Recipes
- 14-15 Top tips for healthy teeth
- 16 Visiting the dentist
- 17 Finding a dentist
- 17 Medicines
- 18 Notes
- 19 Appointment record



Baby teeth are important

All teeth are important, even baby teeth.

Babies are usually born without teeth but they start to come through at around the age of six months.

This can be earlier or later in some children.

By the age of about 24 months, most children will have all 20 of their baby teeth.

Some baby teeth don't fall out until the child is around 12 years of age, so they need to last a long time.



Tooth decay is a big problem for children

In England, by the age of five, **1 in 4 children** have tooth decay. In some areas of Yorkshire, this number rises to almost **half of all children**.

Tooth decay can affect children and their families. Children can be in pain, struggle to eat and sleep and even miss school.

Sometimes facial swelling and infection can develop and lead to an unexpected hospital admission.

Parents often have to miss work when children are in pain or need to attend dental appointments.

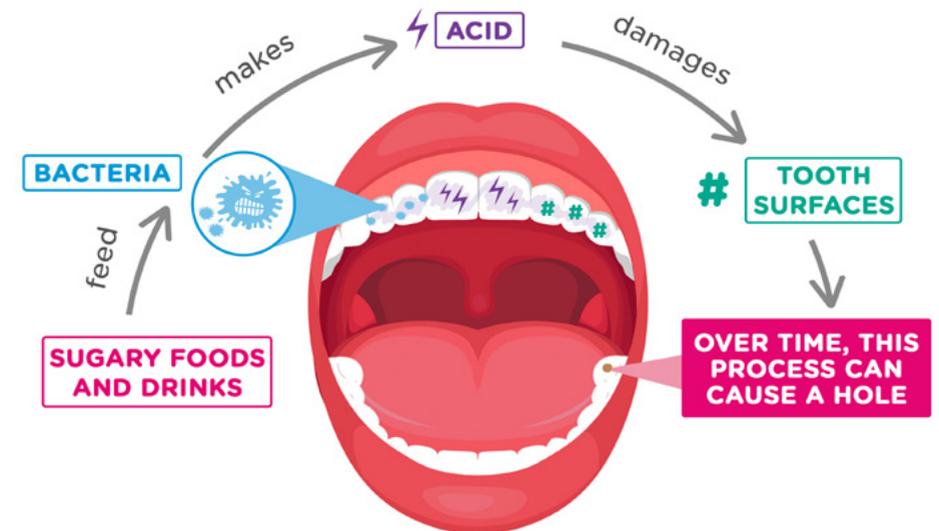
Tooth decay is a big problem for children, but thankfully it can be prevented.

DID YOU KNOW?

Having teeth taken out is the most common reason for children aged between 5 - 9 to go to hospital for a scheduled admission.

What Causes Tooth Decay?

When we eat **sugar**, the **bacteria** (bugs) in our mouth turn the sugar into **acid** which attacks our teeth and causes **tooth decay** (holes) in our teeth. The water in our mouth (Saliva) helps to protect our teeth.



Prevention of Tooth Decay

Tooth decay can be prevented.

We need to keep **sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes only** so that our saliva can help protect our teeth in between meals. Frequent sugar intake causes damage to teeth as saliva can't repair the damage caused.

It is very important to **brush our teeth twice a day** with fluoride toothpaste to help strengthen teeth and help fight against tooth decay.

Infective Endocarditis and why is it linked to my teeth?

What is Infective Endocarditis?

Endocarditis is a rare infection of the inside of the heart or main arteries.

Most patients with congenital heart disease are at increased risk of getting endocarditis.

Children with a structural problem with their heart, are much more at risk of getting endocarditis.

It is a serious condition and can cause major damage to the heart valves and may even cause stroke or death.

Endocarditis most commonly affects:

- Heart valves
- Holes in the heart; or
- Abnormalities on walls of blood vessels or within the heart, even when they have been repaired

How might my child feel if they were developing infective endocarditis?

Patients with endocarditis develop a **temperature** and **feel generally unwell**, with symptoms **very similar to having the flu**.

Flu is very common and usually resolves after about a week.

Flu like symptoms with a temperature which persist for longer than a week should be reported to your child's cardiologist, not just your child's GP, so that specialist tests can be carried out to check for endocarditis.



Endocarditis is a serious condition requiring a hospital admission for treatment with intravenous antibiotics lasting at least 4 weeks and sometimes leads to the need for urgent surgery.



How might my child get infective endocarditis?

Endocarditis can only occur if bacteria get into the bloodstream (called bacteraemia).

Although it is not possible to prevent all bacteria getting into the bloodstream, there are some things you can do to reduce the risk of getting endocarditis.

The following can lead to infections which may cause endocarditis:

- Ear piercing
- Other body piercings
- Tattooing

Patients at increased risk of endocarditis are ***safest avoiding these procedures.***

Everybody carries bacteria in the mouth. These are usually harmless, but if the teeth or gums become diseased it becomes much easier for large numbers of bacteria to get into the blood, with the risk they may settle in the heart and cause endocarditis.

Keeping your teeth clean and free from tooth decay can really help reduce the chances of infective endocarditis.

Why is it so important to look after my teeth if I have congenital heart disease?

As children with congenital heart disease are very special, so are their teeth.

Sometimes teeth develop with areas of weakness which are more prone to tooth decay.

It is therefore even more important to look after teeth and gums to reduce the risk of

- tooth decay
- inflamed gums
- pain and infection
- infective endocarditis



How to look after your child's teeth

There are two main ways to look after our teeth, **toothbrushing** and **healthy eating**.



Toothbrushing

We need to start brushing babies' teeth **as soon as they come through**.

Parents/carers should brush children's teeth until the age of at least 7, and assist when needed above this age.

Toothbrush

Choose a small toothbrush which is designed for children, they often have recommended ages written on the pack to guide you.

Aim to be **brushing for 2 minutes** by the time all of their baby teeth are through (around 24 months).

Make sure you are brushing **all surfaces** of the teeth and **keep an eye out for new teeth** coming through.

You can use an electric toothbrush but manual brushes are also great.



Toothpaste

Toothpaste should contain between **1,350 to 1,500 ppm fluoride** depending on your child's age.

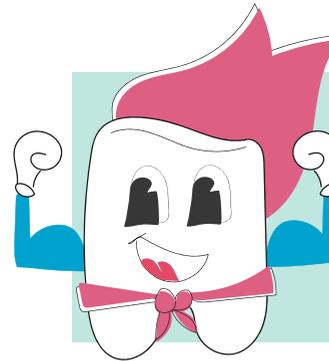
Most toothpaste is labelled with the appropriate age for your child.

You should use only use a **smear of paste** for children under the age of 3 years. Use a **pea-sized amount** of paste for children aged 3 and above.

Aged under 3
"Smear"



Aged 3 and over
"Pea-sized"



Fluoride

- Strengthens enamel
- More acid resistance
- Slows tooth decay
- Can heal early decay

Children should be encouraged to spit out any excess toothpaste and **not rinse with water after brushing** as this washes off the fluoride that is protecting the teeth.

Make it fun!

There are always going to be times when children, especially around toddler age, don't want to have their teeth brushed, this is completely normal and part of growing up.

Managing this behaviour can be challenging, but remember, any brushing is better than no brushing.

There are lots of great resources with ideas on how to make brushing more fun. Stick with it and you'll get there.



Scan here to watch a video with more help and tips!

Healthy eating

Eating a wide variety of foods from **all food groups** can help keep teeth and gums healthy.

There are certain **nutrients** in foods that are needed as the **building blocks** of teeth and gums, so are really important.



Protein

Protein in your diet can help to keep your gums strong as well as keeping your immune system healthy. This helps fight bacteria that have made a home in your mouth.

Calcium & Phosphorus

These can help to promote strong teeth and bones. Find them in plain natural yoghurt, milk and cheese, as well as non-dairy food like fish, nut butters and beans.

Vitamin C

This helps to keep your gums healthy and is in lots of tasty foods like fresh fruits, potatoes, peppers and tomatoes.

Some examples of healthy snacks



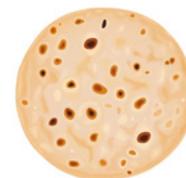
Banana



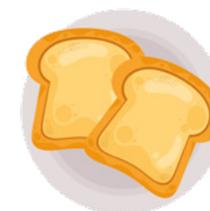
Cucumber Sticks



Bread Sticks



Roti



Toast with Butter



Milk



Vegetables



Plain Yoghurt



Rice Cakes

You can find some healthy, recommended recipes at:
www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes

top tips for healthy teeth



Only **breast milk**, infant **formula** or cooled **boiled water** should be given in a **bottle**.



SPIT

DON'T RINSE

Toothpaste builds a **protective layer of fluoride** on teeth. Rinsing washes it away!



It is best to try and **stop the use of a bottle by 12 months of age**. Free-flow cups can be introduced from 6 months.

Avoid putting a child to bed with a bottle. Sucking on the bottle over a long period of time can contribute to tooth decay.



Teeth should be brushed at least twice a day. Once before bed.

Resist the urge to snack frequently on **high sugar foods** like sticky or hard sweets.

Instead go for **snacks with a good boost of nutrition** and **lower sugar** levels like **cheese sticks** or **carrot sticks**.



Keep sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes. The more often we eat sugar, the more damaging it can be for our teeth.

In between meals, **water** or **milk/unsweetened milk alternatives** are great choices.



From 12 months onwards, after brushing teeth at night only drink water.





Visiting the Dentist

It is important to take your baby/child to the dentist **by the age of one**.

Even if they don't have any teeth, the visit will get them used to going.

It is recommended that your child has a **dental check up with a specialist in Paediatric Dentistry once they reach the age of two** and all their baby teeth have come through.

The dental team can give you **help and advice** about looking after your child's teeth and **identify any problems early**.

These useful links provide further information about looking after children's teeth:

- www.bsdpd.co.uk/Patients/PatientInfo
- www.toothbrushinghabit.com
- www.oralb.co.uk/en-gb/product-collections/childrens-oral-health
- www.brushdj.com
- www.aquafresh.com/en-gb/about-us/aqf-app

Don't have a Dentist?

For more information about how to find an NHS dentist visit:

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists

...or scan the QR code.



Medicines

Speak to your pharmacist about **sugar free medicines** to help look after your child's teeth.

Where possible, try to **give any sugary medicines at a mealtime** rather than in between meals.





CHILDREN'S HEART SURGERY FUND

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Find out more at www.chsf.org.uk

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