

Teeth Cleaning Strategies

Children can excessively dislike and resist teeth cleaning. Young children will need help and it's not uncommon for toddlers and children with delay to resist. Generally children will need assistance from an adult to brush their teeth twice a day until age 7. Talk to your health visitor and dentist about oral hygiene.

- Introduce teeth cleaning in pretend play and read toddler books with teeth brushing, watch and copy an adult.
- Let the child hold a toothbrush and use a second brush for cleaning. Use a small headed toothbrush of medium texture.
- Tell the child why it's important. Consider use of a social story. Use of a tooth brushing song. Stay calm.
- Have fun and use reward charts, stickers, etc.
- An adult can apply deep pressure to the cheeks with both hands on cheeks before teeth cleaning – blow up cheeks and squash flat. An older child may take on these strategies.
- Play tongue games before brushing – e.g. count teeth on left side with tongue, put tongue in cheek etc
- Use a small amount of toothpaste
- Try bicarbonate based/flavourless toothpastes – helps stop gagging.
- Use of a mirror.
- Use an electrical toothbrush – provides deep pressure and vibration to help calm and organise. Can also be used on cheeks and face before teeth brushing to desensitise.
- General blowing and sucking games during the day – blowing bubbles, party poppers, drinking through a straw

Helpful Resources:

- Toothbrushes and finger toothbrush – Mothercare, John Lewis, Boots or similar
- Soft chewable toothbrush – Boots
- Mild mint / fruit flavoured / bicarbonate of soda based toothpaste – Boots or similar
- Flavourless toothpaste - e.g. OraNurse via Amazon
- Chewable toothbrush – Fuzzybrush. Lloyd pharmacy, Amazon
- Electric toothbrush with small head - from Amazon, Boots, Tesco, etc
- Timer toothbrush with light – Superdrug or similar