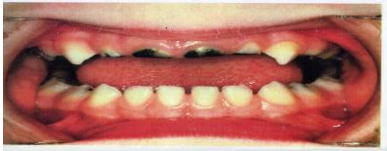


Dummies

If you are breastfeeding, try to avoid giving your baby a dummy until breastfeeding is well established.

Aim to stop your baby using a dummy by the time they are 12 months old, as this can affect the position of teeth and prevent your baby from babbling, which is the first stage in learning to talk.

Never dip a dummy into anything sweet, as this can cause tooth decay.



Sugar free medicines

Medicines that contain sugar can cause tooth decay.

Sugar free medicines are much kinder to teeth, especially if they need to be taken often during the day and at night.

Always ask for sugar free medicines for your baby at the pharmacy or from your doctor.

Visiting the dentist

Take your baby to visit the dentist from an early age. This will help your baby to get used to the surgery and staff.

Remember

- Brush teeth and gums last thing at night and one other time during the day.
- Use family toothpaste with the correct amount of fluoride for your baby's age.
- Choose milk and plain water only.
- Reduce the amount of sugary foods and drinks given during the day and at bedtime; keep them to mealtimes.
- Always choose sugar free medicines where possible.
- Visit the dentist regularly.

A list of local dental practitioners is available from: www.nhs.uk

Local Community Pharmacy - Your local community pharmacies offer a wide range of services including information and general advice on symptom relief medicines as well as a prescription collection and delivery service.

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.

 www.twitter.com/Bridgewater_NHS

 www.facebook.com/BridgewaterNHS

www.bridgewater.nhs.uk

© Version No: BRIDGE0043 – May 2021 to May 2024
reviewed by Bridgewater Lay Reader Panel

Oral Health Improvement 0-19 Integrated Service

Oral health care for babies



Teething

Babies start teething when they are around four to six months old.

Babies generally get their first tooth between six and eight months old but every child is different.

Some babies suffer with teething troubles, for example:

- Red or sore gums where a tooth is coming through
- Redness of the cheeks
- Dribbling
- Chewing or gnawing on fingers or toys
- More irritable than usual.

There is little evidence to show that rashes, fevers or diarrhea are linked to teething, so check with your doctor if you are concerned.

To help with teething, give your baby something to bite on, such as a teething toy or a cooled teething ring to soothe the gums.

Never put teething rings in the freezer, as they can become too hard and may harm your baby's gums.

Teething gels or herbal remedies may help. Ask your pharmacist for advice about these products.

If necessary, use infant sugar free pain medicine. Always check the label before giving medicine to your baby or ask the pharmacist for advice.

Brushing

Use a small, soft toothbrush and a tiny smear of toothpaste family toothpaste containing no less than 1000 parts per million (ppm) fluoride.

Fluoride helps to protect teeth against tooth decay.



Brush your baby's teeth and gums last thing at night and one other time during the day.

Drinks

Breast milk provides the best nutrition for babies.

To keep your baby's teeth healthy, choose breast milk, formula or plain milk depending on their age. Cool boiled water is best.

Start your baby on a free-flow cup by six months old and aim to have your baby off a bottle by 12 months old.



Never give your baby sugary drinks in a bottle or valve type feeder cup, as this can cause tooth decay.

Food

Sugar **will** cause tooth decay if given to babies and children **lots of times** during the day and at night.

Never add sugar to your baby's food when introducing solid foods.

Once your baby is having regular meals, keep anything sugary to mealtimes only.

Make sure that any foods given are sugar free.

Fresh fruit, cheese, toast, plain rice cakes are healthier choices.



Dried fruits are very sugary and sticky and should be kept to mealtimes.

Always check food labels as sugar hides in so many foods.

Sugar is also known by the following names:

sucrose, glucose, maltose, fructose
dextrose, glucose syrup and honey.

Watch out for hidden sugars!