



# Patient Information Leaflet Prevention Of Dental Disease In Children

Cork University Dental  
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain how to prevent dental disease in children and it contains answers to many frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or if you would like further information, please ask us.

Preventing dental decay or cavities in children's teeth is easier than treating it. Good dental habits that begin early in life can keep teeth strong and healthy and provide a good start for adult teeth.

## How can I best look after my child's oral hygiene?

Children are advised to brush their teeth or have their teeth brushed for them (up to 7 years of age) twice a day; in the morning and at bedtime.

**Age: Under 2** Parents/carers are encouraged to brush their child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears, using a soft toothbrush and water only.

**Age: 2-7** Parents/carers are encouraged to brush their child's teeth, or help them brush with fluoride toothpaste containing at least 1,000 ppm F. Use a small pea size amount of toothpaste and **SPIT OUT** when finished.  
**DO NOT RINSE** after brushing.

**Age: 7+** Children are encouraged to brush their teeth twice a day using fluoride toothpaste containing at least 1,000 ppm F. Children are encouraged to **SPIT OUT** toothpaste and **NOT RINSE** after brushing.

## What sort of food is safest for my child's teeth?

Dietary guidelines in Ireland are currently based on the food pyramid. This is designed to help people to eat a balanced diet, combining several different types of food in the correct amounts.

Eating patterns are established early in life so it is important that children eat a well-balanced diet with the correct daily serving sizes from the food pyramid.

- Limit children's intake of sugar containing foods and drinks, and ideally, keep these to mealtimes only
- Avoid snacking (sugary snacks and drinks) between meals
- Milk and water **only** are "safe" for children's teeth
- Never give your child a bottle with soft drinks or juices during the day or at night while sleeping
- Never dip a soother in honey/sugar
- Beware of "hidden sugars" in such products as ketchup, cereals, juices etc.

## **Fissure Sealants**

The first permanent adult teeth usually appear in the mouth from 6 years of age and these molar teeth are very often fissure sealed to protect them from decay.

### **Is there anything else I should know?**

- Always ask your doctor, dentist or pharmacist for sugar-free versions of prescribed medicines
- Infants should be weaned off a bottle from 12 months of age
- Advise your child to wear a gum shield during all contact sports

**This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients>**