The New Zealand Ministry of Health ‘School Dental Service Guidelines: Use of Fluorides’ states that

for children under six years of age:
• a fluoridated toothpaste should be used
• a smear (5 mm on a small brush) of toothpaste is all that is required.

for children six years of age or older:
• a 1000 parts per million fluoridated toothpaste should be used
• an amount of toothpaste the size of a small pea is all that is required.

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Key Public Health Messages About Toothpaste*

• Teeth should be brushed twice daily with a toothpaste containing approximately 1,000 ppm fluoride.

• Children under the age of five should use no more than a smear of fluoride toothpaste on a small brush.

• Children should be discouraged from swallowing or eating toothpaste.

* Fluoride Public Health Commission 1996

Differences between New Zealand and Australian recommendations for toothpaste use for children under the age of 6 years

The Fluoride Update documents produced in Australia and distributed in New Zealand by the Colgate Dental Education Programs have some differences in the recommendations for toothpaste use for young children compared to the current NZ recommendations. The Home use of fluoride documents Practice Information Sheet No. 3 and Fluoride Information Pamphlet No. 3 recommend use of low-strength fluoride toothpaste for children under the age of 6 years, whereas in New Zealand the Ministry of Health recommends that 1,000 ppm toothpaste be used. The following message has been reproduced from the NZ Fluoride Public Health Commission 1996 report.
The Chatham Islands lie 800 km east of New Zealand. Health services are provided by Hawkes Bay DHB.