



Figure 8. No juice and sweet drinks from baby bottles

Tips for healthy eating and drinking

- > Avoid giving your child any sweet drinks, such as soft drinks, juice or cordial in baby bottles or feeder cups. Baby bottles should only be used for expressed breast milk, infant formula or water.
- > Encourage your child to drink from a cup from 6-12 months of age
- > Avoid putting your child to sleep with a bottle or feeder cup
- > Help your child develop a healthy eating pattern with regular nutritious meals
- > Encourage your child to limit sugar intake from food and drinks. It is best to limit any sugar intake to mealtimes as the saliva flow is higher at these times
- > Try to limit healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, yoghurt and bread, to twice a day and keep sugary treats for special occasions
- > If your child needs regular medications – ask your doctor or pharmacist about sugar-free alternatives

Remember, oral health is important for overall health. Poor oral health can lead to difficulty eating, sleeping, pain and poor self-esteem. By following the easy steps listed above, together we can help your child's smile last a lifetime!

Acknowledgement:

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Is your child at risk
of tooth decay?

Information for Parents (Australia only)

Special Topic Pamphlet No. 10

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Why does your child need to be assessed for tooth decay?

Oral health professionals will check your child for tooth decay and assess their risk of developing decay in the future. This helps to plan how often your child should visit for check-ups as well as letting you know the best way that you can help heal any early signs of dental decay at home.

What factors will be checked?

- > Your child's age
- > What they eat and drink
- > The amount of fluoride they use and consume
- > How well they clean their teeth
- > How long between dental check-ups
- > Any medical condition they might have and any medications they may be on

What will the oral health professional look for?

- > Any fillings or tooth decay that has been treated in the past
- > Signs of early decay
- > Signs of severe decay
- > The shape of teeth and presence of deep pits and grooves
- > How clean the teeth are
- > How much saliva is in the mouth

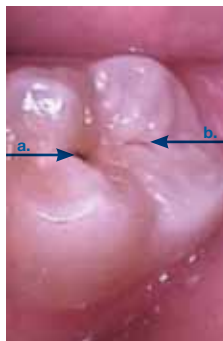


Figure 1. Teeth with deep pits and grooves are more at risk of decay

a. Arrow indicates a Deep Pit
b. Arrow indicates a Deep Groove

There are 3 levels of risk for tooth decay

1 Low Risk:

- > Your child has a low risk of decay and may be recalled for dental checks at longer intervals e.g. 12 months

2 Moderate Risk:

- > Your child may be in danger of getting decay and should visit at least every 6-12 months
- > Your child's teeth might be painted with fluoride varnish every six months
- > X-ray/s might be used to check your child's teeth every year
- > If your child's teeth have deep pits and grooves they might be covered with dental sealants



Figure 2. Painting teeth with fluoride varnish

3 High Risk:

- > Your child has a high risk of decay and should visit at least every 3-6 months
- > X-ray/s of your child's teeth might be taken every six months
- > Your child's teeth might be painted with fluoride varnish at least twice a year.
- > You may be advised to use a higher concentration of fluoride toothpaste for your child at home
- > If your child's teeth have deep pits and grooves they might be covered with dental sealants



Figure 3. A tooth with a dental sealant

Figure 4. Taking a dental X-ray



What can you do at home to stop your child getting tooth decay?

- > Protect your child's teeth with fluoride.
- > Drinking tap water. If your drinking water does not contain fluoride (e.g. Tank water or you live in an area without fluoride in the tap water), talk to an oral health professional about the best way to protect your child's teeth.
- > Use fluoride toothpaste. Start brushing your child's teeth with a soft brush as soon as they appear in the mouth. At 18 months you should begin to brush with a children's toothpaste which has the correct amount of fluoride. Use a smear of toothpaste



Figure 5. Drinking tap water



Figure 6. Low fluoride toothpaste and a child-sized toothbrush

- > Make sure that brushing is done twice a day – after breakfast and at bed time. Make sure that every part of every tooth is brushed clean
- > At about 5 years children can start brushing on their own – but they still require adult help until they are at least 7-8 years old.

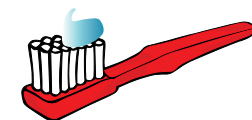


Figure 7. Pea-sized toothpaste

- > At 6 years of age your child should swap over to adult-strength fluoride toothpaste.
- > Encourage your child not to swallow but to spit out toothpaste and not to rinse after brushing