

Join The Smile Squad.



If you're expecting a baby then there's plenty of things to think about - including looking after your teeth and gums.

We've put together advice for taking care of your mouth during pregnancy and the first few years of your child's life.

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/oralhealth

Keeping your mouth healthy during your pregnancy and beyond.

You can get **free NHS dental treatment** if you're pregnant when you start your treatment - and for up to 12 months after your baby is born.

To get free NHS dental treatment, you must have a valid maternity exemption certificate (MatEx). These are given out by your midwife or GP.

When you go to the dentist, make sure they know you're pregnant as some treatments may need to be delayed until after your baby is born.

It's important to keep your teeth and gums clean and healthy while you're pregnant. There's some top tips below:

- Clean your teeth **twice a day for 2 minutes** with a fluoride toothpaste using an electric or small headed toothbrush. Your dentist can show you a good brushing method.
- Floss once a day to remove food and plaque.
- Avoid having sugary drinks (such as fizzy drinks or sweet tea) and sugary foods too often - try to keep them to mealtimes.
- Limit fruit juice and smoothies to one portion a day as they are acidic and can damage your teeth if you drink too much.

Hormonal changes during pregnancy can make your gums more vulnerable to plaque, leading to swollen, sore and bleeding gums.

This is called **pregnancy gingivitis or gum disease**. Your dentist can help with this.

If you have **morning sickness**, rinse your mouth with plain water or fluoride mouthwash after you are sick to rinse the acid off your teeth.

Wait about an hour before brushing because your teeth will be softened by your stomach acid.

Feeding your baby and toddler.

Breast or formula milk is the only food or drink babies need in the first 6 months of their life

Experts recommend that you continue to breastfeed, or give your baby first infant formula, until they're at least one year old.

Introduce your baby to drinking water from a free flow cup or beaker from around 6 months.

Avoid 'no-spill' designs or sippy cups with valves in them.

Despite being messy to start with, an open cup, or a 'free-flow' cup are the best options.

Don't add anything else to your baby's feed. This includes sugar, honey, cereals, baby rice or chocolate powder.

If your baby is bottle fed, it's recommended that they stop drinking from bottles with teats by the time they are one year old as this can prevent their teeth from developing properly.

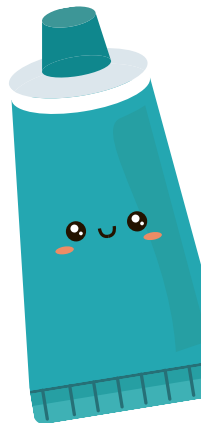
Brushing your child's teeth.

Start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as they start to come through. First teeth usually appear around **4 - 6 months**.

Use a family toothpaste with at least 1,000ppm (parts per million) of fluoride. You can check this on the ingredients list on the tube.

For children **under the age of three** use a grain of rice sized amount of toothpaste. For children **aged three and over** use a pea-sized amount.

By around the age of three, children should have all 20 baby teeth. It is important to brush for at **least two minutes, twice a day**.



Try to brush just before bed and at another time that fits in with your routine such as first thing in the morning before breakfast.

Brush all the tooth's surfaces and also where the gum meets the tooth as this bit can often get missed.

Encourage your child to spit the toothpaste out afterwards but do not rinse out your child's mouth with water after brushing as this will wash away the fluoride.

Supervise brushing your child's teeth until they are at **least seven years old** and they are able to do it properly themselves.

Either a manual or electric brush is fine to use. Just be sure that all tooth surfaces are clean and that your child feels confident with a manual brush before introducing an electric one.

If you want to swap to an electric toothbrush then your child should be at least **three years old** for safety reasons.



Visiting the dentist

NHS dental treatment for children is free so take your child for their first appointment as soon as their first tooth comes through, and for regular check ups as often as your dentist advises.

When you visit the dentist, be positive and try to make the trip fun.

Children can pick up if you are worried or nervous, so how you react will help them.

You can find your nearest NHS dentist by searching online at www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist

Try not to worry if you find toothbrushing with your child a challenge. If at first you don't succeed, don't give up. Just try again

The important thing is that you stick with it and help them to make good oral health a part of their daily routine.

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