

## For all children it is important to:

Visit a dentist regularly.

**Have sugar-free food and drinks between meals.** The best drinks are plain water or milk.

**Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste,** with at least 1000ppm (parts per million) fluoride.

For children younger than three years, put a **smear** of toothpaste on their brush.



Children who are three years or older should use a **small pea-size** amount of toothpaste

**If you have any concerns, please talk to the health professional who gave you this leaflet.**

Further advice can be obtained from  
The Children's Dental Team, NHS Lothian

Bonnyrigg Dental Centre  
0131 536 8941

Wester Hailes Dental Clinic  
0131 453 9100

Craigroyston Dental Clinic  
0131 332 7930

Howden Health Centre  
01506 418 532

Information in easy to read format can  
be found on the NHS Lothian Intranet  
under the Learning Disability Team

This leaflet was compiled by the Children's  
Dental Team,  
NHS Lothian Public Dental Service

March 2015

**Review date: March 2016**

## Looking after my child's teeth



**Information for parents of  
children who have difficulties  
with eating, drinking or  
swallowing**

## If your child finds it difficult to have their teeth brushed:

You can get your child used to having things in their mouth by slowly introducing gum massaging with a finger.

Some people find a soft baby finger brush helps before moving on to a soft toothbrush.



Other children prefer a vibrating electric brush.

Talk to your dentist about ways of making brushing easier.

## If your child does not like the taste of the toothpaste:

You could try 'Oranurse' unflavoured toothpaste



## If your child has difficulty swallowing:

Use **low foaming** toothpaste.

These pastes are called SLS (sodium lauryl sulphate) free.

Examples of low foaming toothpastes include Pronamel, Aquafresh Little Teeth or Oranurse Unflavoured



Ask your speech and language therapist about the best position for your child for brushing.

## If your child is fed by a tube, they still need to have their teeth brushed.

**Brushing** the teeth, gums and tongue twice a day gets rid of some of the bugs (bacteria) that live in the mouth. This means that your child is less likely to get **chest and gum infections**.

## Oral nutritional supplements, tasters, thickened food and drinks, and medicines can contain sugars.

If your child takes them frequently they are more likely to get holes in their teeth.

Talk to your dietitian about the best time to take supplements, tasters and thickened drinks. **Meal times are best for teeth.**

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about changing to sugar-free medicines.

## If your child has reflux or frequent vomiting, they can get erosion of their teeth

Erosion is when the enamel (top layer of the teeth) is worn away by acid.

After reflux or vomiting, rinse your child's mouth with milk (if safe) or eat a small piece of hard cheese. Don't brush their teeth for at least 20 minutes- an hour would be even better.

Talk to your dentist about the placement of fluoride varnish.