



Länsi-Uudenmaan hyvinvointialue
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Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County

Oral Health Care for Children Aged 4–6

Maintaining oral and dental health is a family commitment. It is important to incorporate dental care into your child's daily routine. As guardians, you play a pivotal role in shaping your child's future dental habits and attitudes towards oral hygiene.

Adults are responsible for ensuring the child's teeth are cleaned properly as the child is still only learning how to brush their teeth.

Tooth Eruption and Shedding of Baby Teeth

- By the age of 4, children usually have a full set of 20 baby teeth (milk teeth), while permanent teeth are still developing within the jaw. The transition from baby teeth to permanent teeth starts between the ages of 6 to 8. However, this varies from child to child.
- It is important to monitor the eruption of permanent teeth from age five onwards. Pay special attention to the permanent molars emerging behind the first baby molars, ensuring they are properly cleaned as soon as they appear.

Regular mealtimes and drinking water when thirsty benefit oral health

- **Regular mealtimes protect teeth from cavities.** Limit frequent consumption of sugary foods and beverages. Habitual snacking is harmful for the teeth.
- **Water is the best drink to quench thirst.** Note that dairy drinks should be consumed during meals.
- Most foods and beverages contain carbohydrates that produce tooth-decaying acids. Teeth can endure such acid erosion five to six times daily, but they require a 3–4-hour rest between meals, allowing saliva to cleanse and repair the acid damage.
- Xylitol chewing gum or tablet shortens the acid attack and increases saliva secretion and rinses the surfaces of the teeth. An example of good practice is the use of xylitol products at the end of meals. The recommended daily dose of xylitol is at least 5 grams. The amount is obtained from 6–10 chewing gums or pastilles. Choose full xylitol products.

How to brush a child's teeth

- **Brush the child's teeth for two minutes twice a day.** Apply a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste—approximately the size of the child's fingernail (with a fluoride content of 1000–1100 ppm). Pay special attention to the gum lines and chewing surfaces.
- The toothbrush should be a small, soft children's toothbrush. You can transition to an electric toothbrush as soon as the child feels comfortable with it.
- Even children can have inflamed gums. If so, you might notice slight bleeding during brushing.
- As the child grows, they will want to brush on their own. However, an **adult should assist with brushing until the child is about 10 years old.**

Sources

www.kaypahoito.fi
www.terveysportti.fi

