

Tips for healthy teeth

First teeth, or baby teeth, are important as they help your child to speak and eat properly. If these teeth are badly decayed your child can experience a lot of pain. Permanent teeth are hidden in the gums and are damaged by decayed first teeth.

Decay can be prevented by good dental care and good eating habits.

Healthy snacks are important for young children to grow and develop **BUT** they only need to snack once between meals.

Tooth Friendly Snacking

- Limit snacking to 2-3 times a day. Give teeth a rest between meals and snacks. Saliva plays an important role in protecting teeth so it is important to have some times in the day when that is all that is in the mouth.
- ***Avoid sipping on juice or sweet drinks such as flavoured water, fizzy, powdered, sports and energy drinks. Do not put in drink bottles or weaning cups.*** If sweet drinks are offered keep them to meal times and dilute them. Water and milk are the best drinks.
- Limit foods that stick to the teeth and are kept in the mouth a long time as these foods encourage decay. (E.g. fruit leathers, lollipops, some muesli bars too!) Small children find it difficult to remove food that is stuck to their teeth like adults would so dissolving food can cause tooth decay easier.
- Enjoy healthy snacks such as – **raw fruit & vegetables sticks, sandwiches/crackers with peanut butter, vegemite, baked beans, cheese, hummus, and relish. Muffins, scones, pancakes, popcorn without sugar, yoghurt, custard in pottles, fruit smoothies, cheese blocks.** Try to make sure any snack you give to small children has some nutrient value rather than just sugar, fat and calories.
- Try to avoid letting children fall asleep with drinks of milk or juice in bottles and weaning cups. This can cause major tooth decay as once a child is asleep they don't produce saliva to protect their teeth. This means that the sugar from the drink will remain on their teeth until they wake.

Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and physical activity Information for Under 5s

For more information visit: www.cph.co.nz

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