



**Oral Health
Foundation**
Better oral health for all



**brush
time**



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Background

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published guidelines encouraging schools and nurseries to help children brush their teeth, particularly in disadvantaged areas of England.

Tooth decay and gum disease are the two of the most common and entirely preventable dental problems.

Statistics identify that one in eight three year-olds and one in four five year-olds suffer from visible tooth decay, while more than 25,000 children aged five to nine have been admitted to hospital due to tooth decay.

Nearly a quarter of 5 year olds in England have tooth decay, with 3 or 4 teeth affected on average. Tooth extraction is one of the most common procedures for children under 6 in hospital. Extraction is also the most common reason for hospital admission for children aged 6 to 10. Children from more deprived backgrounds are more likely to have tooth decay.

An average of 3 school days are missed every year due to dental problems. Tooth decay is a serious problem among young children, yet it's a largely preventable disease,

Children who have toothache, or need treatment, may have pain or infections. This can have a wider effect and lead to problems eating, sleeping, socialising and learning.

Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter OBE, said: "Tooth decay is entirely preventable through nothing more than a few very basic oral health messages. The Oral Health Foundation encourages everybody to brush their teeth last thing at night and at least one other time during the day using a fluoride toothpaste, cut down on how much and how often they have sugary foods and drinks and visit the dentist regularly, as often as they recommend.



Introduction

Brush Time is a comprehensive tooth brushing programme which has been developed by the Oral Health Foundation to advise nursery and school staff on how they can help children to brush their teeth correctly. It is also a really useful guide for dental professionals visiting schools!

Given that tooth decay remains a common problem in young children, the necessity for intervention and pro-active programmes are greatly needed.

- Brush Time is suitable for children of all ages in both part-time and full-time education and care, and is freely downloadable.
- Created to help teachers and healthcare professionals educate young people about oral health.
- Includes guidance on the type of toothpaste which should be used for children of certain ages, how to properly brush teeth, how to store toothbrushes between use to avoid infection.
- Includes frequently asked questions about children's oral hygiene.
- Supports evidence-based key messages about regular daily brushing, fluoride toothpaste and good oral hygiene.

Teachers play a vital role in a children's development as they are a trusted and familiar figure for them to learn and develop behaviour from. They can make a real difference when it comes to nurturing children's tooth brushing behaviour and improving their oral lifelong health.

Brush Time is a fantastic opportunity for teachers and dental professionals alike to help young children understand the importance of good oral health and can really help spread the message of good tooth brushing behaviour.

This programme is designed to help guide nursery and school staff wishing to set up and implement a daily toothbrushing programme for children in their care. For those that wish to participate, this toothbrushing programme is suitable for all children of all ages in both part-time and full-time education and care



Need to Know

Under 3 years of age

A pea sized smear of toothpaste containing no less than 1000 parts per million (ppm) fluoride should be used for children under 3 years.



Over 3 years of age

A pea sized amount of toothpaste containing at least 1350-1500ppm(parts per million (ppm) fluoride should be used.

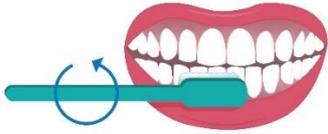
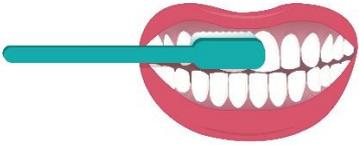


Toothbrushes should have a small head size. The toothbrush needs to be small enough to reach behind the back teeth and brush them easily).

The bristles should be medium or soft so that they do not hurt the gums.

Toothbrushes should be replaced at least every 3 months, or after illness.

How to brush

<p>Don't rush to brush. Spend two minutes, last thing at night and at least one other time during the day:</p>	 <p>Place a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on the bristles of the toothbrush (pea sized smear for those under 3 years)</p>	 <p>Move the brush in small round movements, brushing all outside surfaces of every tooth</p>
 <p>Remember to keep the bristles angled to where the tooth meets the gum.</p>	 <p>Now brush the biting surface of every tooth.</p>	 <p>Then brush the inside surfaces of each tooth, make sure you get right round the back</p>
 <p>Use the tip of the brush to reach the inside of the teeth at the front, both upper and lower.</p>	 <p>Brushing the tongue can help to remove bacteria from the mouth too.</p>	 <p>Spit the toothpaste out and don't rinse. Just rinse your toothbrush.</p>

Daily Routine

Introducing a tooth brushing programme into the everyday activities will help to ensure that this is a positive activity which becomes a routine.

- Each child brushes at least once a day. It is hoped that the child will also have brushed their teeth for two minutes at least once at home, last thing at night.
- Children are closely supervised when brushing and there should be suitable instruction to all children on how to brush their teeth to create effective brushing and good habits.
- Tooth brushing takes place either in groups or individually, at a time most suitable.
- When a toothpaste tube is shared, toothpaste should be dispensed directly onto a clean surface such as a paper towel or plate. There must be sufficient space between the quantities of dispensed toothpaste to allow collection without cross contamination.
- Children are discouraged from swallowing toothpaste during and after brushing. Toothpaste should be spat out, do not rinse.
- A tooth brush storage system should be used which facilitates air drying and prevents cross contamination.
- After tooth brushing, brushes are rinsed thoroughly and replaced in the storage system to dry.

Food and drink can soften the tooth enamel so tooth brushing should not take place within one hour of a snack or meal. It is understood that a child may not be in the educational care environment long enough for this to be practical.



Delivering Better Oral Health, 4th Edition, 2021, Department of Health, oral health toolkit would be a recommended reference for all oral health prevention practice.

Infection Control

Toothbrush storage

Toothbrushes are a potential source of infection. Good practice would encourage the use of a system which:

- stores toothbrushes in either an appropriate storage system or individual holders
- enables brushes to stand upright when positioned
- allows sufficient distance between toothbrushes to avoid cross contamination
- stores toothbrushes in systems which allow for natural air drying
- has covers and is stored at adult height.



Cleaning procedures

Good cleaning practice should be an integral part of childcare in the nursery and standards should include:

- Wearing of household gloves to clean storage systems and sinks, and all cuts, abrasions, and breaks in the skin should be covered with a waterproof dressing before cleaning is carried out.
- Storage systems and storage areas are cleaned, rinsed and dried at least once a week using warm water and general purpose neutral detergent.
- Care is taken to ensure that tooth brushes do not touch when being removed or replaced in storage systems.
- Storage systems are not positioned adjacent to the sink area or next to the children whilst tooth brushing is taking place in order to prevent cross contamination.
- Storage systems are replaced if cracks, scratches or rough surfaces develop.
- Any toothbrushes dropped on the floor are discarded. Toothbrushes should not be soaked.

Toothbrushing session

An example of how to run a group brushing session:

1. The child should be supervised at all times.
2. The supervisor or the child can be responsible for collecting the toothbrush from the storage system.
3. Toothpaste is dispensed by the supervisor by placing the appropriate smear or pea sized amount directly onto a paper towel or plate. Each dispensed amount should be placed apart from each other to allow collection onto a brush head without contamination from other brushes or pastes.
4. Each child or a supervisor can collect the paste from the paper towel or plate using their brush head.
5. Children may be seated or standing whilst tooth brushing takes place.
6. Make sure that all children use correct brushing techniques (allowing for a learning period) and that they brush for two minutes.
7. After tooth brushing is completed, children can spit excess toothpaste into either a disposable tissue or disposable paper towel.
8. Tissues/paper towels must be disposed of immediately after use in a refuse bag.
9. Toothbrushes can be:
 - returned to the rack by the child and taken to an identified sink area by the supervisor who is responsible for rinsing each toothbrush individually under running water or
 - rinsed at a designated sink area where each child is responsible for rinsing their own toothbrush under cold running water
 - the supervisor or the child can be responsible for the control of the cold running tap.
10. Toothbrushes are returned to the storage system by the supervisor or child and allowed to air dry.
11. Sinks should be rinsed after tooth brushing.



Frequently Asked Questions

1) How do we clean the toothbrushes?

Rinse under the cold running tap, ensuring all the toothpaste is removed. At no time should brushes be stored or cleaned together. Do not put them in a sink together.

2) Is rinsing the toothbrushes enough?

Yes rinsing is enough as each brush is only used by that one child so there are no cross infection issues.

3) What to do if toothpaste has hardened on bristles?

Rinse brush under warm water to loosen toothpaste and then rinse in cold water.

4) How do we clean the BrushBox?

Clean the BrushBox once a week with **soapy water** ensuring all surfaces are washed, rinsed and dried thoroughly.

5) Should brushes be drained or wiped before going back in the trolley?

When the brushes are rinsed, place them on a paper towel ensuring they don't touch each other (top and tail toothbrushes with a gap of at least 2 inches between them) to ensure no cross infection. By placing the toothbrushes onto the paper towel this will soak up excess water on the brushes.

6) What to do if a child has bleeding gums?

Follow the same policy that you would use to discard any bloody tissues following nose bleeds and inform the parent so they may contact their dentist for review.

7) How can I prevent the names rubbing off brushes?

We would recommend the names should be written on toothbrushes with a permanent pen such as a Staedtler Lumocolor permanent - 0.6mm F. This has been tested and works very well.

Toothbrushing songs

Are your teeth clean and white

(Tune – 'Do your ears hang low')

Are your teeth clean and white?
Do you brush them left and right?
Do you brush them in the morning?
Do you brush them every night?
Do you brush them up and down?
Do you brush them round and round?
Are your teeth clean and white?



Wiggle-Jiggle tooth

(Tune – 'Old Macdonald')

In my mouth, I have some teeth
E i e i o
And in my mouth I put my brush
E i e i o
With a wiggle-jiggle here and a wiggle-jiggle
there
Here a wiggle, there a jiggle
Everywhere a wiggle-jiggle
In my mouth I'll keep my teeth
E i e i o

Brushing teeth

(Tune – 'Twinkle twinkle little star')

Here's my toothpaste
Here's my brush
I won't hurry, I won't rush
Working hard to keep teeth clean
Front and back and in between
When I brush for quite a while
I will have a happy smile

Brush, brush, brush your teeth

(Tune 'Row, row, row your boat')

Brush, brush, brush your teeth
Brush them every day
We put toothpaste on our brush
To help stop tooth decay

Clean, clean, clean your teeth
Clean them every day
Your teeth will sparkle for years to come
In the most beautiful way

Brush, brush, brush your teeth
Brush them every day
Happy, healthy teeth you'll have
If it's done this way



Resources

Storage System

The BrushBox storage system is designed by the Oral Health Foundation and holds up to 12 toothbrushes in an upright position.

Manufactured from a high quality durable acrylic outer with a removable colour insert, this system allows for effective and easy cleaning and makes it possible to lift the toothbrushes clear of the outer without the need to touch the brushes. The hinged lid provides natural air drying and the BrushBox is self-stacking.

Available in Red, Green, Yellow, Blue.

Slots hold plain manual handle brushes (a range of toothbrushes can be purchased from

www.dentalhealthshop.org which will all fit.



Age 1-5yrs
(TBTINY)



Age 1-5yrs
(TBTPMIN)



Age 4-12yrs
(TBECJD)



Adult
(TBREV)

Toothbrushes

A small soft headed toothbrush is best. Toothbrushes supplied by the Oral Health Foundation are all supplied with soft or medium bristles and have different size heads depending on the age or mouth size using it.

They all have assorted colour handles upon which you would write a name or symbol if required for identification.

A permanent pen such as the Staedtler Lumocolor permanent - 0.6mm F has been trialed successfully for this use and does not come off with daily rinsing.

Toothbrushes should be replaced every 3 months or each school term. Sooner if the bristles become splayed or following a period of sickness.

Toothpaste

Fluoride toothpaste has been proven to prevent decay.

0 – 3 years – a small pea sized smear of toothpaste containing no less than 1000ppm fluoride should be used.

3+ years - a small pea sized amount of toothpaste containing at least 1350–1500ppm fluoride should be used.

A good all round total family toothpaste is fine and available from supermarkets and chemists. It is not necessary to use a specialist children's toothpaste. A list of toothpaste and their fluoride content is found in Delivering Better Oral Health, 4th Edition, 2021.

Motivators

Reward Charts can be used to record brushing and help create good habits

Stickers can be given to children to encourage them to keep brushing

Certificates could be given to acknowledge achievement



Large 2 Minute Sand Timer

helps make sure that a perfect amount of toothbrushing time is achieved.



Giant teeth puppet model

For tooth brushing demonstrations individuals and groups.

Hardwearing and durable puppet style model.

Information Leaflets

The Oral Health Foundation publishes information leaflets which are written in an easy to understand question and answer format. They are written by qualified dental staff and approved for plain English by the Word Centre. These titles would be recommended as useful additional information for parents:





Shopping List

	Quantity	Unit £	Total £
Essentials			
BrushBox Clear		£29.00	
TePe Select Compact Toothbrush (3+ yrs)		£1.25	
TePe Mini Toothbrush (0 - 3 yrs)		£1.25	
Wisdom Toothpaste 0-3yrs or 3+ (75ml tube)		£0.88	
Paper Towels		£3.68	
Gloves		£9.84	
Demonstration			
Large 2 minute timer		£11.00	
Giant teeth puppet model with brush		£27.00	
Motivation			
Stickers (pack of 100)		£6.75	
Reward Charts (pack of 50)		£6.75	
Information Leaflets			
Dental care for mother and baby pack of 25		£4.50	
Children's teeth (under 7 years) pack of 25		£4.50	
My teeth (over 7 years) pack of 25		£4.50	



Sample permission form

School Address

Toothbrushing Programme

Dear Parent/ Guardan

In partnership with your children’s school, we are hoping to involve your child in tooth brushing once a day with fluoride toothpaste at nursery. This has been shown to improve children’s dental health. The children will be brushing their own teeth under the supervision of the nursery staff.

This programme should not take the place of brushing teeth at home—you should continue to brush your child’s teeth last thing at night and one other time during the day with a fluoride toothpaste.

Should you wish to withdraw your child at an y time from the programme, please inform the nursery in writing.

Please sign below to give your permission, and return the slip as soon as possible to the school.

Yours faithfully

I give/do not give my permission for (Child’s name) to take part in tooth brushing at nursery.

Does your child have special fluoride drops/tablets/toothpaste from your dentist? Please write here and speak with the nursery staff.

.....

Does your child have any allergies? Please list here

.....

Signed.....parent/guardian

Date





Sample letter to parents/guardians

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your child will be brushing their teeth with fluoride toothpaste, every day at nursery/school/group.

Top tips for brushing with your child

Brush teeth and gums thoroughly last thing at night and at least one other time during the day, with a fluoride toothpaste.

Children under 3 years should have no more than a smear of toothpaste with no less than 1000ppm of fluoride content.

Children over 3 years of age should use no more than a pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing 1350ppm to 1500ppm of fluoride.

Put toothpaste onto a dry brush.

Brush for 2 minutes.

Brush both top and bottom teeth, outside and inside, back and front and biting surfaces.

Your child should spit out excess toothpaste, do not rinse after brushing.

Children need help with brushing until they are at least 7 years old.



Other tips to care for teeth

Sugary foods and drinks can damage teeth, keep these to a minimum and try to have at mealtimes only.

Between meals, drink water or milk and try not to snack.

Dental check ups are important, and everyone should have regular dental visits. To find a dentist visit www.nhs.uk.

Important note

If your child is receiving treatment from your dentist which includes special fluoride drops/tablets or toothpaste then please advise nursery staff so that the correct toothpaste is used in nursery/school/group.