

# Introducing toothbrushing

## A guide for childminders

Young children need help with toothbrushing on a daily basis.

Brushing at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste in the home can help prevent tooth decay. In addition, Childsmile has developed a national supervised toothbrushing programme where each child brushes once a day in nursery or targeted school settings. Childminders can offer supervised toothbrushing to children in their care.

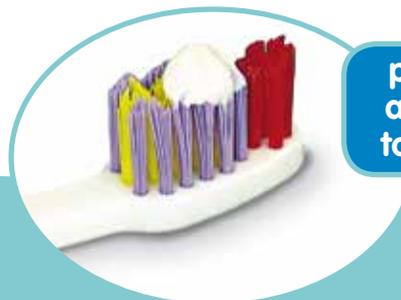
### Toothbrushing guidance

**Children should be supervised by an adult until the age of 7 years.**

1. Each child should have their own named and identifiable toothbrush and tube of toothpaste.
2. Children under 3 years should use a smear of toothpaste containing at least 1000 parts per million (ppm) fluoride.
3. Children over 3 years should use a small pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing at least 1000 ppm fluoride.
4. Babies and younger children should use a toothbrush with a small head and soft bristles.
5. After use, each brush should be rinsed under a cold tap, shaken dry to remove excess water and stored in an appropriate storage system (individually named and ventilated).
6. Toothbrushes should be replaced every three months or sooner (when the bristles start to splay).



smear of  
toothpaste



pea-sized  
amount of  
toothpaste



### Remember

- Use toothpaste containing at least 1000 ppm (parts per million) fluoride.
- Children should be supervised until the age of 7 and encouraged not to swallow toothpaste while brushing.
- 'Spit, don't rinse' after brushing. This gives the toothpaste time to protect teeth.
- Keep food and drinks containing sugar to mealtimes only.
- Plain milk and water are the safest drinks for teeth.
- Children who swallow too much fluoride over a long period of time can develop white spots on their teeth. This is not tooth decay. The risk of developing white spots as a result of the toothbrushing programme is very small.

## Frequently asked questions

### 1. How do I get support and guidance?

Dental support, guidance and information is available from your local Childsmile Coordinator. Details of local contacts are available from [www.child-smile.org.uk](http://www.child-smile.org.uk)

### 2. Do I need consent from parents or legal guardians and how often should I ask for this?

Yes, written consent is required from parents or guardians. This is only required once and is updated every six months as part of the care plan review or as circumstances change.

### 3. Do I need to keep records?

Yes, toothbrushing records should be kept to include the name of the child, when the toothpaste and toothbrush were given, the dates they were replaced and the parent's or legal guardian's consent. These can be included as part of the child's care plan.

### 4. How would I store toothbrushes and toothpastes for the children in my care?

Toothbrushes for a child who is not one of your own family must be stored in an appropriate storage system, such as a rack or an individually named and ventilated holder. Toothpaste for each individual child should also be named. We recommend toothpaste and toothbrushes used by the childminder's family should be stored well away from the toothbrushes and toothpaste used by the children in their care.

### 5. How do I stop toothbrushes from getting contaminated while carrying out the toothbrushing and supervising children?

Storage systems should be washed weekly (more frequently if heavily soiled) with household detergent and warm water then rinsed and dried. Care must be taken to ensure that toothbrushes do not make contact with other toothbrushes while being removed or replaced in the storage system for either use or cleaning. Any contaminated toothbrushes must be discarded and replaced.

### 6. Which is the correct fluoride toothpaste for children?

Always use toothpaste with at least 1000 ppm fluoride. Toothpaste tubes have this information written on the tube and packaging.

### 7. What time of the day should I brush?

Choose a time convenient to you and the children in your care. Incorporate toothbrushing into your daily routine. Familiarise the children with this routine.

We are happy to consider requests for other languages or formats. Please contact 0131 536 5500 or email [nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net)