

Tooth brushing removes germs and food that cause cavities.

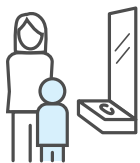
Help brush your children's teeth until they are 7 to 8 years old. Some older children may still need your help to do a good job.



BRUSHING

Your Child's Teeth

Comm. 016 (12/23)



Position

- For younger children, sit on a couch or bed and place your child's head on your lap.
- Older children can stand in front of you with both of you facing the same way.
- Lean your child's head against your body to reach their mouth easier.



Using Toothpaste

- Always use a fluoride toothpaste.
- For children under age 3, use only a smear of toothpaste.
- For children 3 years and older, use no more than a pea-sized amount.
- Encourage children to spit out extra toothpaste after brushing.



Brushing

- Place the toothbrush on the teeth next to the gum line.
- Use a gentle circular motion and make sure you clean all of the teeth - insides and outsides.
- Next, brush the chewing surfaces. Don't forget the back teeth!
- Finish by brushing the tongue from back to front. This is an easy place for germs to collect.



Other Helpful Tips

- Brush 2 times a day. One of these times should always be before bedtime.
- Use an infant- or child-sized toothbrush with soft bristles.
- Brush for at least 2 minutes. Use a timer or have your child brush for an entire length of a song.
- Lift the lips and cheeks to clean along the gum line.
- Replace toothbrushes every 3 to 4 months.

2 min.



Dental floss cleans places where a toothbrush cannot reach.

As soon as the teeth touch, begin flossing your child's teeth. Most children need help with flossing until they are 8 or 9 years old.

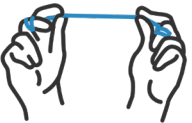
FLOSSING

Your Child's Teeth



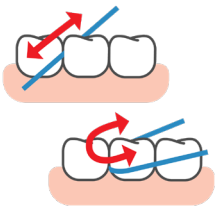
Position

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- Older children can stand in front of you with both of you facing the same way.
- Lean your child's head against your body to reach their mouth easier.



Holding the Floss

- Use about 18 inches of floss (the length from your fingertips to your elbow).
- Wind the floss around each of your middle fingers and leave a few inches of floss between your hands.
- Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and pointer fingers to begin flossing.



Flossing the Teeth and Gums

- Gently guide the floss between your child's teeth, using a back and forth 'sawing' motion.
- When the floss reaches the gums, curve it into a C-shape against one tooth.
- Gently rub the floss up and down the side of the tooth and under the gum.
- Repeat this for the other tooth and gum and then gently 'saw' the floss out.
- Do this for all of the child's teeth that touch each other.



Other Helpful Tips

- Floss at least once a day - right before bedtime is best.
- Avoid jerking or snapping the floss between the teeth. This can hurt your child's gums.
- Use a 'clean' section of floss as you move from tooth to tooth. This can be done by unwrapping and re-wrapping the floss around your middle fingers.
- Remember to floss behind the back teeth!