

Supervised tooth brushing Information & Frequently asked questions for Parents/Guardians

This information sheet informs you about the supervised tooth brushing programme that is being held in your child's school/nursery, and frequently asked questions.

The supervised tooth brushing programme is specifically designed for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old. This is the best age to introduce correct tooth brushing technique and form good behaviours, which will last a lifetime. The children learn to brush their teeth themselves, correctly.

By setting up a supervised tooth brushing programme in schools it allows the children to incorporate it in their school routine and follow the good practice at home.

1. **Invitation to take part** – Children between the ages of 3 and 5 are invited to take part in a supervised tooth brushing programme at their nursery/school. Before you decide if you wish for your child to take part, it is important that you know why this is being done, and what is involved. If you still have questions after reading this information sheet please contact your child's nursery or school.
2. **Why has my child been chosen to take part in this programme?** Evidence shows that brushing teeth effectively using fluoride toothpaste is the best way to prevent tooth decay, brushing at school/nursery is the best way to keep teeth healthy. Children in nursery/reception classes have been invited to take part.
3. **Does my child have to take part?** It is up to you to decide if you would like your child to take part. If you do then you will be asked to sign a consent form, which will need to be returned to nursery/school before they can take part. You can change your mind and withdraw consent at any time.
4. **How will this programme benefit my child?** Evidence shows that children who effectively brush their teeth at a young age are less likely to experience tooth decay and form behaviours, which will last a lifetime.
5. **Will this cost me anything?** No this programme is completely funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement
6. **What toothpaste will be used?** The toothpaste used in the programme is age appropriate (1450ppm Fluoride) mild mint flavour.
7. **Are there any risks or reasons why my child should not take part?** There are very minimal risks associated with this programme, some young children may be taking fluoride supplements or drinking fluoridated water as well as swallowing toothpaste, this can cause Fluorosis (white spots in the enamel of the teeth). This can be eliminated by encouraging the children to spit out the toothpaste and not to swallow it. NB. There is no fluoride in the water supply in Devon so the risk of Fluorosis is low.

8. **Will staff be trained?** Yes, all staff involved in the programme will receive training from a qualified Oral Health Educator.
9. **What safeguarding measures are in place?** As well as staff being trained, there will be an audit process in place to make sure the programme is being followed and to ensure guidelines are being met.
10. **Will children have their own toothbrush?** Yes, this is a very important part of the programme. All children will have their own toothbrush, which will be identified as theirs and stored in a specifically designed storage unit, eliminating cross contamination. Full cross infection control procedures are in place.
11. **How will the programme work?** Children will sit or stand; staff will dispense the toothpaste using a suitable cross contamination method. Each child will then commence tooth brushing for 2 minutes under the supervision of staff. They will be encouraged and shown the correct tooth brushing technique. No water is needed for tooth brushing, as we do not promote rinsing after brushing as this just washes the good fluoride off the teeth. Once the 2 minutes is up toothbrushes are individually rinsed and returned to the storage unit. Storage units are regularly cleaned by staff.
12. **Will my child still need to brush their teeth at home?** Yes, this programme is in addition to brushing at home. The most important time to brush is at bedtime and one other time in the day (usually at breakfast time). Brushing for 2 minutes using a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste is very important. You may find that your child is more willing to brush at home, having taken part in the school programme.
13. **Will I receive any further information?** Yes, your child will bring home an oral health goody bag and information on how to look after teeth for the whole family.

Top Tips for brushing at home

Start brushing children's teeth as soon as they appear

Use a smear of toothpaste for children under 3 (which contains 1000ppm fluoride)

Use a pea size amount of toothpaste for children 3 and over (which contains 1450-ppm fluoride)

Do not rinse out with water or mouthwash after brushing, this will only dilute the fluoride in the toothpaste.

Visit a dentist regularly. Children should start seeing a dentist by the age of one

Reduce the amount of sugar in the diet by keeping and sugary food or drink to meal times. Snack on fruit and sugar free options instead.

For further information please visit <http://www.healthylearningtorbay.co.uk/>

