

Richmond Road Dental Information Sheet



Caring for Your Child's Teeth

Your child's first teeth or "baby" teeth are just as important as their permanent teeth. Apart from allowing your child to chew and speak properly, they hold the correct space for the permanent teeth and premature loss could lead to crowding of the adult teeth. Dental decay in children's teeth is commonly caused by prolonged contact of sweet liquids, food acids or food with the teeth. It is important to teach your child how to care for their teeth.

When to Introduce Tooth Brushing



Your child's first teeth will erupt at about 4-8 months. Use a soft washer wrapped around your finger to gently clean the teeth until 9-10 months of age. Teach them about brushing one step at a time. Give them a small soft dry toothbrush to play with while they watch you brush your own teeth then brush their teeth with water only. Children over the age of 2 can start using a small amount of children's toothpaste which has half the amount of fluoride as adult toothpaste. It is important that you have established a good brushing routine by the time the molar teeth erupt. You should start flossing your child's teeth as soon as the teeth are in contact with each other, usually between the ages of two and three. Children don't have the dexterity to brush and floss properly so supervise them until they are about 8-10 years old.

When to Start Visits to the Dentist

Between the age of 18 and 24 months bring your child in for their first dental visit. We will give them a ride in the chair (on your lap) and "count" their teeth. When they are 2 or 3 years old can we give their teeth a polish. It is fun for them to choose a gift from our "reward box" and they see visiting the dentist as a positive experience.

Tips to Avoid Tooth Decay in Children

- A balanced diet and good nutrition is the key to reducing the risk of dental decay.
- Never settle a baby to sleep with a bottle of milk, fruit juice or cordial. Instead offer water.
- Avoid a high sugar diet. Offer fresh fruits and vegetables, wholegrain cereals, meats and dairy products.
- Encourage your child to drink water instead of sugary drinks. Avoid soft drinks and cordials. Even fruit juice contains a lot of sugar, limit to one cup a day (diluted) at meal times only. Sipping sugary drinks all day causes severe decay.
- Limit sugary snacks.
- Never put honey or sweeteners on a child's dummy.

Thumb Sucking and Dummies

Sucking is a natural reflex but children who continue to suck after their permanent incisors erupt risk crooked permanent teeth and a narrow palate which constricts the airway. Rewards such as a star or sticker calendar can be effective. Talk to your dentist if you are concerned about your child's sucking habit.

Primary Teeth

Upper Teeth	Erupt	Shed
Central Incisor	8-12 Months	6-7 Years
Lateral Incisor	9-13 Months	7-8 Years
Canine (Cuspid)	16-22 Months	10-12 Years
First Molar	13-19 Months	9-11 Years
Second Molar	25-33 Months	10-12 Years

Lower Teeth	Erupt	Shed
Second Molar	23-31 Months	10-12 Years
First Molar	14-18 Months	9-11 Years
Canine (Cuspid)	17-23 Months	9-12 Years
Lateral Incisor	10-16 Months	7-8 Years
Central Incisor	6-10 Months	6-7 Years