



# Giving teeth the best start

Advice for parents/carers of children 0-3 years old

**Congratulations on your new baby. It is an exciting time for all the family with lots of new responsibilities to think about. Caring for your child's teeth is just one of them and it's never too early to start thinking about establishing a good oral health routine. These top tips can get your child off to the best start and achieve a healthy smile that will last a lifetime.**

### **Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding has lots of benefits for both mum and baby. Breastfed babies experience less tooth decay and breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for a baby's overall health. Continue breastfeeding while introducing solids from around the age of 6 months. Speak to your midwife/health visitor for support with breastfeeding or weaning. For more advice visit [www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)

### **Bottles and cups**

For parents or carers feeding babies by bottle:

- only breastmilk, infant formula or cooled boiled water should be given in a bottle.
- babies should be introduced to drinking from a free-flow cup from the age of 6 months.
- feeding from a bottle should be discouraged from the age of 1 year.



### **Healthy Start**

If you are eligible you will receive a Healthy Start Card. You can use the card to buy certain foods, milks and vitamins for you and your child. For more information visit [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

### **Teething**

All babies are different but most usually get their first tooth around 6 months. For some babies, it can be uncomfortable.

Try offering them a cooled teething ring to chew on. If they are in pain sugar free paracetamol or ibuprofen can be given to relieve teething symptoms. Speak to a health professional or pharmacist for more advice.



## Top Tips for Toothbrushing

- Brushing should start as soon as the first tooth appears, usually around the age of 6 months.
- Choose fluoride toothpaste that all the family can use (minimum of 1,000ppmF); for maximum protection against tooth decay toothpaste containing 1,350 – 1,500ppmF is advised. Always check the label.
- Parents or carers should use no more than a smear of toothpaste (a thin film of paste covering less than three-quarters of the child's brush) for children below 3 years of age.
- Parents or carers should use no more than a pea-size amount of toothpaste for children between 3 and 6 years.
- As soon as they are able (usually around the age of 3 years) children should be encouraged to spit out excess toothpaste and not to rinse with water after brushing.
- It can sometimes be a struggle getting babies and young children into a brushing routine. Let them watch you or older siblings and make it fun. Timers and downloadable apps can be helpful to assist younger children with the length of time toothbrushing.
- Parents or carers should brush their young children's teeth until at least 7 years of age.



## Visiting a dentist

It is important that both you and your baby have a dental check-up before their first birthday. If you need to find a local NHS dentist call NHS 111 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## GM Urgent Dental Care

If you do not have a regular dentist and have a dental emergency call:  
0333 332 3800 8.00am – 10.00pm  
7 days per week or visit  
[www.gtdhealthcare.co.uk/  
patient-services/dental](http://www.gtdhealthcare.co.uk/patient-services/dental)



If you would like to make some small changes to your lifestyle that can make a big difference to your general health and well-being contact Be Well Tameside. The service provides free, one to one, health and well-being support around stopping smoking, eating healthier or getting more physically active.

For more advice or to make any appointment

Tel: 0161 342 5050

Email: [bewelltameside@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:bewelltameside@tameside.gov.uk)



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### Further advice or information:

- [www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/teething/looking-after-your-babys-teeth](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/teething/looking-after-your-babys-teeth)
- [www.tameside.gov.uk/health/oralhealth](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/health/oralhealth)
- [www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/)
- [www.healthystart.nhs.uk/](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/)

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