

Most parents don't know how to look after their children's smile. DO YOU?

Dental cavities may seem like a normal part of life. The NHS figures show more than 45,000 hospital operations to remove teeth from teenagers and children in 2017/18 - a rise of 18 per cent since 2012/2013. This is a sad statistics, but this pain and discomfort can be prevented by daily brushing, flossing, healthy diet and by the use of fissure sealants.

Pay attention to daily brushing

- First, choosing the right toothbrush is essential for removing decay-causing plaque. At Happy Kids Dental we recommend to use a manual toothbrush with extra soft bristles for 4-36 month old children and an electric toothbrush for older children.
- Second, use a toothpaste with fluoride, it is proven to make teeth stronger and more resistant to decay. For under 3 year old children use a smear of toothpaste containing no less than 1000ppm fluoride. For 3-6 years old children use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing more than 1000ppm fluoride. For children over 6 use regular toothpaste, containing around 1350-1500ppm fluoride.
- Third, you should brush your child's teeth for them for two minutes, twice a day. When they can tie their own shoelaces, they have the dexterity to brush by themselves (usually around the age of 7) but you should supervise them for the whole two minutes!

Choose healthy snacks

Sugar is the biggest culprit when it comes to dental decay, so choosing the right drinks and snacks is crucial. We recommend water as the best drink for kids. Alternatively, natural juice can be given, ideally diluted with water, to reduce its natural sugar content. For snacking opt for fresh vegetables such as cucumber, carrots, celery. Cheese is also a tooth-friendly snack, but go for harder cheeses that won't stick to children's teeth.

Consider fissure sealants

Dental decay is most likely to develop on your child's molars when they first erupt at the age of 6yrs. Their surface is not fully mineralised yet and is has lots of grooves and deep pits that are called fissures. These fissures are usually so narrow that toothbrush bristles are not able to clean them properly, this allows for bacteria to flourish and



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decay to form.

Fissure Sealants were first introduced in the USA in the late 60s and are widely recognised as the greatest advancement in the field of Preventive Dentistry, reducing the probability of tooth decay by 80%! The procedure involves an application of a thin coating painted on the chewing surfaces of the teeth, creating a smoother surface. It helps to prevent food or bacteria from getting trapped ultimately prevents cavities from forming. This procedure is technique sensitive, so it is important to see the paediatric dentist who has extensive experience with children's teeth.

There is no set age to get fissure sealants, as a guideline though, fissure sealants should be applied around the age of 6, when adult teeth are erupting. With a life expectancy 80-90 years, it is important to remember that those adult teeth need to be healthy for at least 80years, thus investing in their long-term health makes a lot of sense.

Prevention lies at the heart of Happy Kids Dental, the team has adopted a variety of playful initiatives to engage children with oral hygiene, such as Toothbrushing academy and theatre shows for local schools. Supporting children as they grow with the best possible care, is the key to a lifetime of happy smiles. ■

www.happykidsdental.co.uk

