

LYNN ROAD DENTAL PRACTICE

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CHILDREN'S TEETH

Caring for your child's teeth is one of many important responsibilities as a parent. We hope that with our expert advice, we can help you get your child off to the best possible start and achieve healthy teeth for life.

- **MILK TEETH**

Also known as baby teeth, primary teeth or deciduous teeth

Your child will have 20 baby teeth which usually come through from the age of about 6 months, but this can vary greatly.

Milk teeth have an important role to play as they hold space for the secondary teeth to descend into. Because the enamel is thin, milk teeth are more likely to be affected by decay and erosion if exposed to too much sugar or acidic drinks.

- **WHEN TO START CLEANING**

As soon as your child's teeth start to come through, introduce them to the idea of cleaning. Use a small soft toothbrush to clean the teeth so your child gets used to the sensations.

Brush regularly as part of your child's morning and night-time routine, using a smear of fluoride toothpaste suitable for their age group.

As your child gets older you can encourage them to do their own brushing, but you should continue to supervise until they are 7 years of age. It is advisable to keep toothpaste out of the reach of young children.



- **FOOD & DRINK FOR LITTLE TODDLERS**

Try and keep drinks and food to mealtimes and avoid giving your child any food or drink with the exception of water in the hour before bed.

Aim to limit food and drinks that contain sugar. This includes those which are said to be healthy, such as dried fruit, which is sticky and clings to teeth. This can be damaging to teeth if frequently consumed between meals.

Water should be made regularly available to your child from around the age of 6 months. Your child is less likely to get tooth decay if their teeth are given a rest from food and drinks other than water between mealtimes.

- **PERMANENT TEETH**

Also known as second teeth or adult teeth

Children's permanent teeth start to erupt at the age of around 6 years and most of your child's permanent teeth should have come through by the age of 12-14 years.

The exception is wisdom teeth which are likely to emerge from the age of 17-21 years. Adults usually have 32 teeth, including wisdom teeth, if they are present.

- **FOOD AND DRINK**

It will be harder for you to control what your child eats and drinks as they get older but hopefully, they have got used to healthy eating. We recommend that you encourage them to limit sweetened foods or drinks to mealtimes only and remember that some products marketed as being 'healthy', including sports drinks contain high amounts of sugar.

- **TAKING RESPONSIBILITY**

As your child grows up, it is important that they begin to take responsibility for their own oral health as you will not be there to monitor their choices at all times.

By educating your child and supporting them to make healthy choices you can have more confidence that they will be able to maintain their oral health.