




BRUSHING YOUR CHILD'S TEETH:

When, Why, And How

WHEN SHOULD WE BRUSH...AND WHY?

We all have bacteria in our mouths. These bacteria create a sticky layer on our teeth called plaque. Plaque makes it easier for bacteria to turn the foods we eat into acids. Acids cause tooth decay!



AFTER BREAKFAST

The food your child eats for breakfast can be turned into acid by their mouth bacteria. By brushing right after breakfast, you can clean away plaque so acid does not stay on their teeth all day. This can help prevent tooth decay.



BEFORE BEDTIME

When a child is awake, their saliva (spit) and tongue work together to help keep teeth clean. But when a child sleeps, their tongue does not move as often. And, less saliva is created. So, teeth do not get cleaned as well at night.



HOW SHOULD WE BRUSH?



PUT A SMALL AMOUNT OF TOOTHPASTE ON TOOTHBRUSH

For children under 3, use a smear of fluoride toothpaste. It should be about the size of a grain of rice.

For children 3 and up, the toothpaste should be about the size of a pea.



TEETH BRUSHING TIPS

Hold the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to your child's gums.

Brush gently, back and forth, using short strokes.

Be sure to brush the front, back, chewing surfaces, and in between teeth!

For the back of the front teeth, turn the brush facing upward. Brush up and down a few times.



BRUSH THE TONGUE

Yes, the tongue. It helps to keep breath fresh and remove bacteria.





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SPIT OUT TOOTHPASTE

During and after brushing, have your child spit out toothpaste. Do not let your child swallow the toothpaste.

WHAT IF MY CHILD CANNOT SPIT YET?

Have them lean over the sink while you brush their teeth. This will let toothpaste drip out of their mouth as you brush.

Take This Lesson to Learn:

- Which food and drinks are good for dental health.
- Tips to get kids excited about toothbrushing time.

To Get Started:

- Visit wichealth.org
- Choose **Sign up**
- Enter your information
- Choose a username and password
- Choose **Begin**
- Choose the category:
Keeping Your Family Healthy
- Choose the lesson:
Two Minutes, Two Times A Day For A Healthy Smile

WHEN?

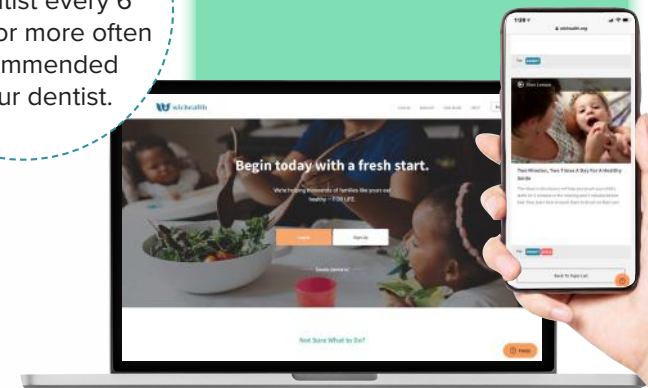
After breakfast and before bed are the best times to brush in general. But, you can decide the exact times of day.

Does your child eat breakfast early or late? If your child eats breakfast at daycare, brush before they leave the house.

Will you brush before or after storytime? Try different times in the morning and evening and see what works best for your family.



It is recommended to take your child to the dentist every 6 months, or more often if recommended by your dentist.



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