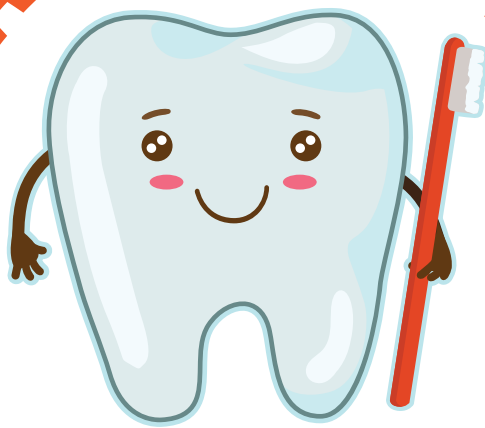
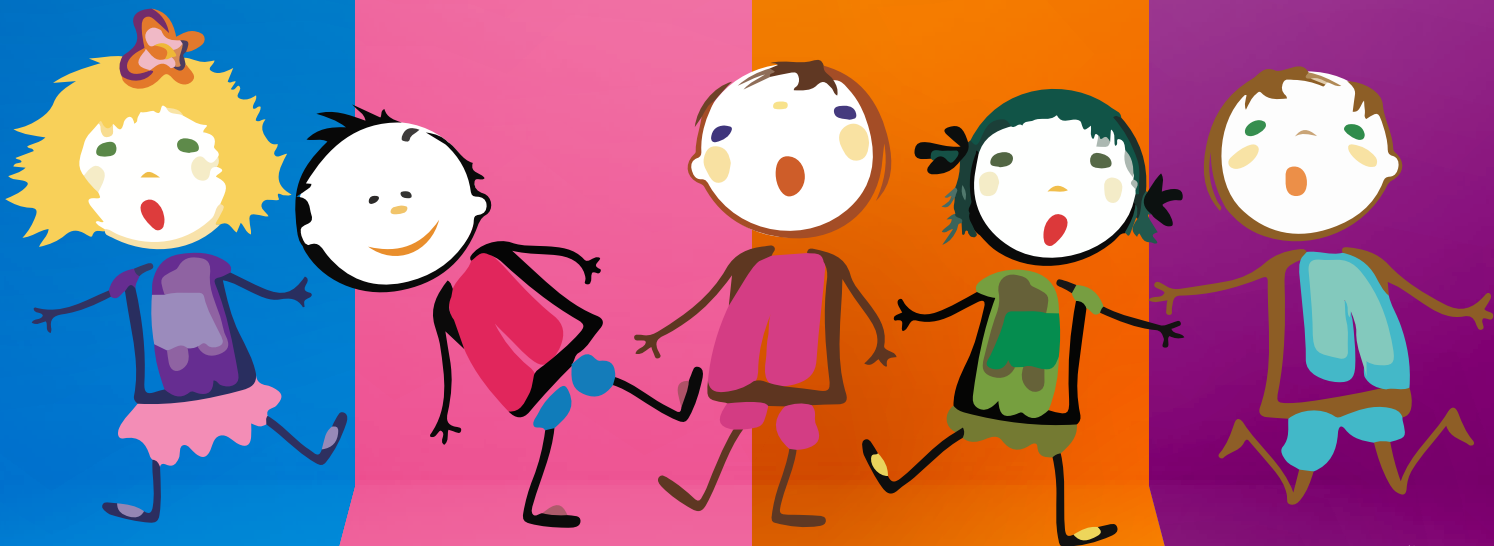


HAPPY TEETH



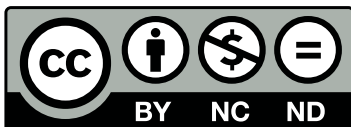
Resource Kit

*Help prevent tooth decay
in early childhood*





Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit. Help prevent tooth decay in early childhood
Published by the State of Queensland (Queensland Health).



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This document is available on the Queensland Health internet at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program> . There is the potential for minor revision of information contained in this resource. Please check the online version for updates and amendments.

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Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Introduction.....	8
Why the early childhood setting?	8
Tooth decay	10
Preventing tooth decay	12
About the Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit	13
Adult roles in the Happy Teeth Program	14
Developing a healthy eating and oral health policy	16
Promoting drink well, eat well, clean well and stay well in early learning services	18
Drink well – age appropriate drinks	19
How to promote: drink well	21
Eat well - age appropriate foods	25
How to promote: eat well	27
Clean well – age appropriate oral hygiene	30
How to promote: clean well	32
Stay well – age appropriate messages	38
How to promote: stay well	40
Educator resources	43
Educator fact sheets	44
Classroom activities.....	61
Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy checklist	71
Newsletter items	74
Setting up a toothbrushing program	78
Songs and Rhymes	87
Letters to parents/carers.....	95
How to access more resources	96
Parent/carers resources.....	97
Glossary	99
Useful contacts and websites.....	101
Reference list.....	104

From the Chief Dental Officer

Oral health is fundamental to an individual's overall health, wellbeing and quality of life¹. To help address this important health issue, Queensland Health is pleased to provide the redeveloped Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit.

The Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit provides evidence-based guidance and support to educators and health professionals to promote oral health in early learning environments. Building healthy behaviours is fundamental in childhood, and early learning services have a valuable role in children's formative education, health and wellbeing.

I acknowledge the collaborative approach of many health professionals, early learning services and consumers in the redevelopment of the Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit and personally thank all organisations and individuals for their valuable contribution, time and expertise.

Thank you for supporting the Happy Teeth Program. You are playing a vital role in helping young Queensland children develop supportive oral health habits and improve their oral health outcomes.

Dr Mark Brown

*Chief Dental Officer
Clinical Excellence Queensland, Queensland Health*



Acknowledgements

The Happy Teeth Program 2021 is the revised version of the Happy Teeth Program 2009. The Happy Teeth, Happy Child Program was originally developed by the Tropical Public Health Unit and Oral Health Services, Townsville, Queensland Health (1999).

Some of the content and concepts in this redeveloped resource have been reproduced from outstanding programs and initiatives implemented throughout Australia:

- *‘Drink well, Eat well and Clean well’* messages developed by Dental Health Services Victoria for their Smiles 4 Miles program. The messages are used with the permission of Dental Health Services Victoria.
- *‘Drink well, Eat well and Clean well’* tip cards adapted from Dental Health Services Victoria’s Smiles 4 Miles program.
- *The Dear Liza Tooth and Sparkle Sparkle Little Teeth* songs provided by Dental Health Services Victoria.
- *Smiles 4 Miles Toolkit*, Dental Health Services Victoria’s Smiles 4 Miles program.
- Age appropriate resources *‘Drink well, Eat well, Clean well and Stay well’* adapted from Dental Health Services Victoria’s Healthy Little Smiles program, Early childhood oral health resource kit for early childhood professionals.
- Age appropriate resources *‘Drink well, Eat well, Clean well and Stay well’* – Key messages for children, including questions and answers adopted from NSW Little Smiles program, Dental Health Resource Package for Childcare Professionals, Centre for Oral Health Strategy, NSW Department of Health.
- Age appropriate resources *‘Drink well and Eat well’* - Recommendations for food and drinks adapted from the Queensland Child and Youth Clinical Network, Paediatric Obesity Working Group, Growing good habits website - www.growinggoodhabits.health.qld.gov.au
- Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy Checklist, Healthy Early Childhood Services, Achievement Program, Cancer Council Victoria and Victorian Government.
- *‘The amount of sugar in common food items’* poster, SA Dental Services, SA Health.
- The background for the toothbrushing program has been incorporated from the former Oral Health Services, Metro South Health Service District (Logan-Beaudesert and Bayside), Queensland Health.
- The background toothbrushing program adapted from materials produced by Dental Health Services, Victoria.
- Educator fact sheet – Foods for babies and toddlers. Recommendations adapted from the Queensland Child and Youth Clinical Network, Paediatric Obesity Working Group, Growing good habits website - www.growinggoodhabits.health.qld.gov.au
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Happy Teeth Professional Reference Group

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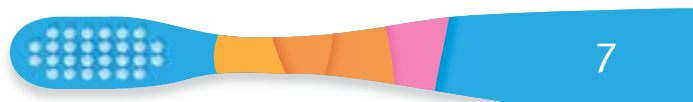
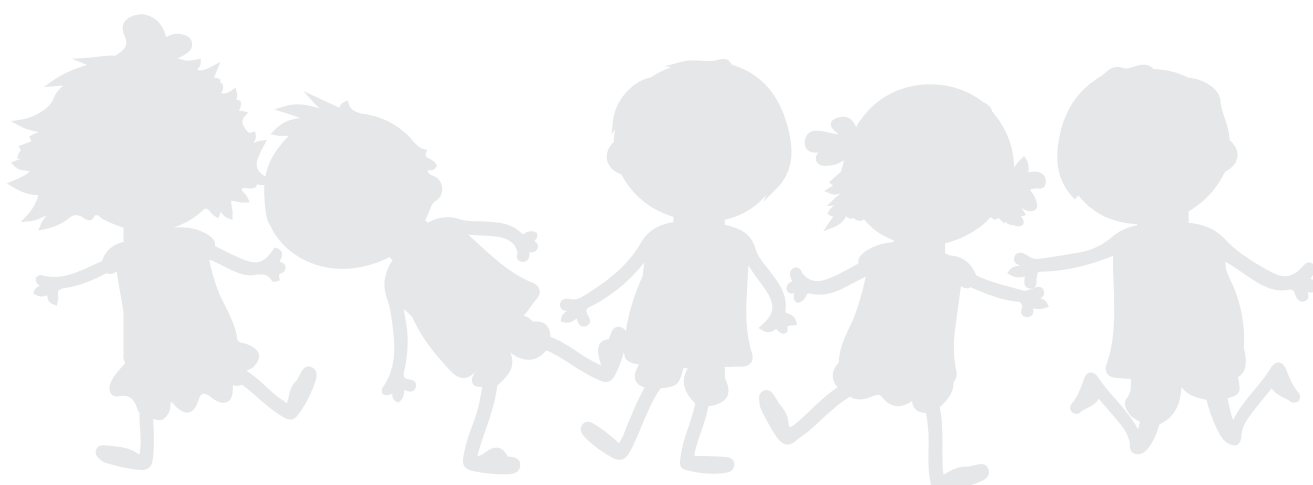
Happy Teeth Consumer Focus Groups

- Logan Village State School Playgroup
- Ballymore Kindy Herston
- Daniella Bryant, Director, Wandilla Magic Child Care Centre Loganholme
- Wennita King, Educational Leader, Immanuel Early Learning Centre Buderim
- Toni McFarlane, Educator, Toni's Family Daycare Yeppoon
- Catriona MacGregor, Director, Rainbow Town Early Learning Centre Robina

Other

- Healthy Kids Advisory Group, Centre for Children's Health and Wellbeing, Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service
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- David Thompson, Principal Workforce Officer, Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland, Clinical Excellence Queensland
- Petrina Zillman, Executive Support Officer, Office of the Chief Dental Officer, Clinical Excellence Queensland, Queensland Health

For all enquiries regarding implementation of the Happy Teeth Program, contact the Office of the Chief Dental Officer on telephone **(07) 3328 9873** or via email oral_health@health.qld.gov.au



The Happy Teeth Program is designed to guide and support educators to develop and sustain behaviours which support good oral health in early childhood (0-5 years).

Early childhood educators play an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of children. The Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit provides evidence based oral health information appropriate for children in early learning services and provides tools and resources to support oral health promotion in early childhood settings.

Why the early childhood setting?

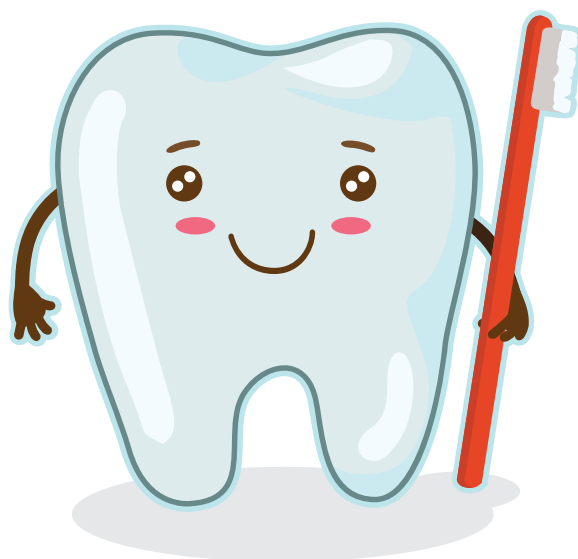
Behaviours developed during early childhood are often established for life. Daily toothbrushing and healthy eating habits, established at an early age, help prevent tooth decay and gum disease across the lifespan. Eating habits are often developed by the time children reach school age. As many Australian children attend early childhood care prior to commencing primary school, this is the ideal setting to promote and reinforce healthy habits and behaviours to provide children with a great start in life.

The Happy Teeth Program recognises both early learning services staff and parents/carers play an important role in the success of the Program. Working together, both share the responsibility to improve the health of the children within the early childhood setting. The Program reinforces the concept that children's needs are best met when trusting partnerships are created between the early learning service, staff and families.

Accreditation and policy alignment

The Happy Teeth Program is an ideal tool for early childhood settings undergoing accreditation. The policies and guidelines are aligned to the Belonging, Being and Becoming - Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care. The Program will support educators to implement best practice within their service and prepare for accreditation.

The Program enables services to create healthier, safer and supportive environments. Children learn to take responsibility for their oral health and hygiene and the result is happier teeth in both the child care setting and home environment.



Oral health in early childhood: what is the issue?

Oral diseases are largely preventable, yet many children suffer poor oral health. Tooth decay is the most common cause of poor oral health in childhood. Tooth decay experience in children attending Queensland Health Oral Health Services (2014-15 to 2016-17) was 43% for 5-6 year old children with primary (baby) teeth while a staggering 21% had four or more teeth affected².

The impact of poor oral health during childhood is far reaching. More than 63 000 Australians are hospitalised each year for potentially preventable dental conditions.¹ In the period 2013-2014 to 2015-16 there were about 4 150 hospital admissions per year for tooth decay in children aged 0-9 years.²

Tooth decay can cause pain, discomfort, infection and can even affect children's growth. Severe tooth decay in baby teeth can have serious consequences for speech and jaw development. The longer tooth decay is left untreated the more the child will experience:

- pain and discomfort
- a high risk of new tooth decay in other teeth
- more complicated and expensive treatment
- anxiety when they visit a dentist because they might start to associate dental visits with pain.³

Baby teeth matter

Baby (deciduous) teeth are with us for more than our baby years. Some of baby teeth remain in the mouth until around 12 years of age. Although they will be eventually replaced by adult (permanent) teeth, baby teeth have a vital role in children's development.

Baby (deciduous) teeth have a vital role in:

- ensuring normal development of the jaw
- maintaining space for adult (permanent) teeth
- allowing children to eat nutritious, fibrous foods
- assisting the development of good speech, including the 's' sound
- helping to develop self-esteem, and
- helping to develop good life-long oral hygiene habits.

Teeth can decay as soon as they appear in the mouth. Children who experience tooth decay in their baby teeth are more likely to develop decay in their adult teeth. Therefore, establishing healthy behaviours in childhood sets children up for healthy teeth for life.

Tooth decay

In simple terms, tooth decay is damage to teeth resulting from poor diet and poor oral hygiene. Bacteria in dental plaque convert sugars and refined carbohydrates into acids. If not removed by effective toothbrushing, these acids attack tooth surfaces causing minerals from the outside layer (enamel) of tooth surfaces to be lost. Over time, repeated acid attacks will result in holes or irreversible structural damage to teeth.

For tooth decay to occur, there needs to be the following ‘key’ ingredients: bacteria in plaque, sugar from foods and drinks, acids and a susceptible tooth

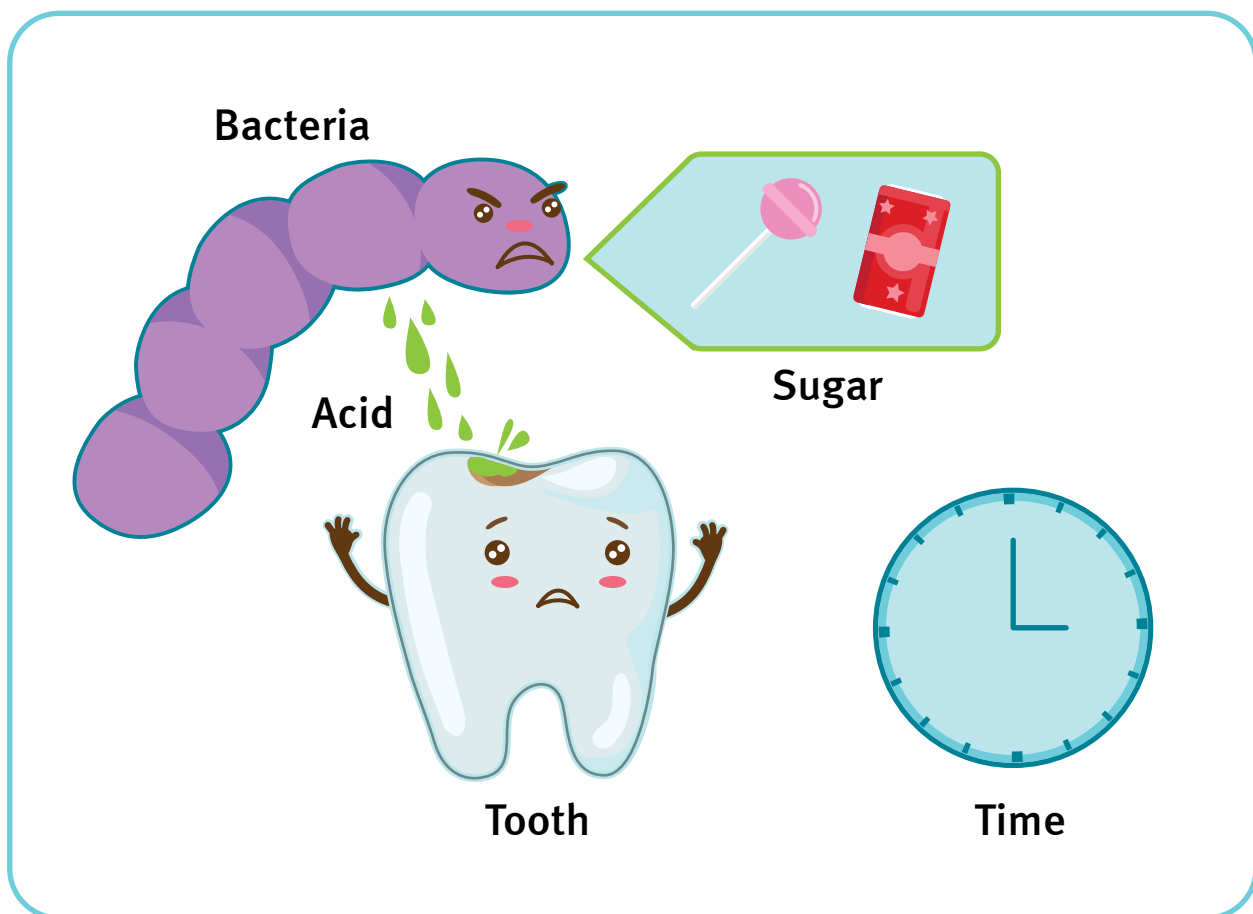
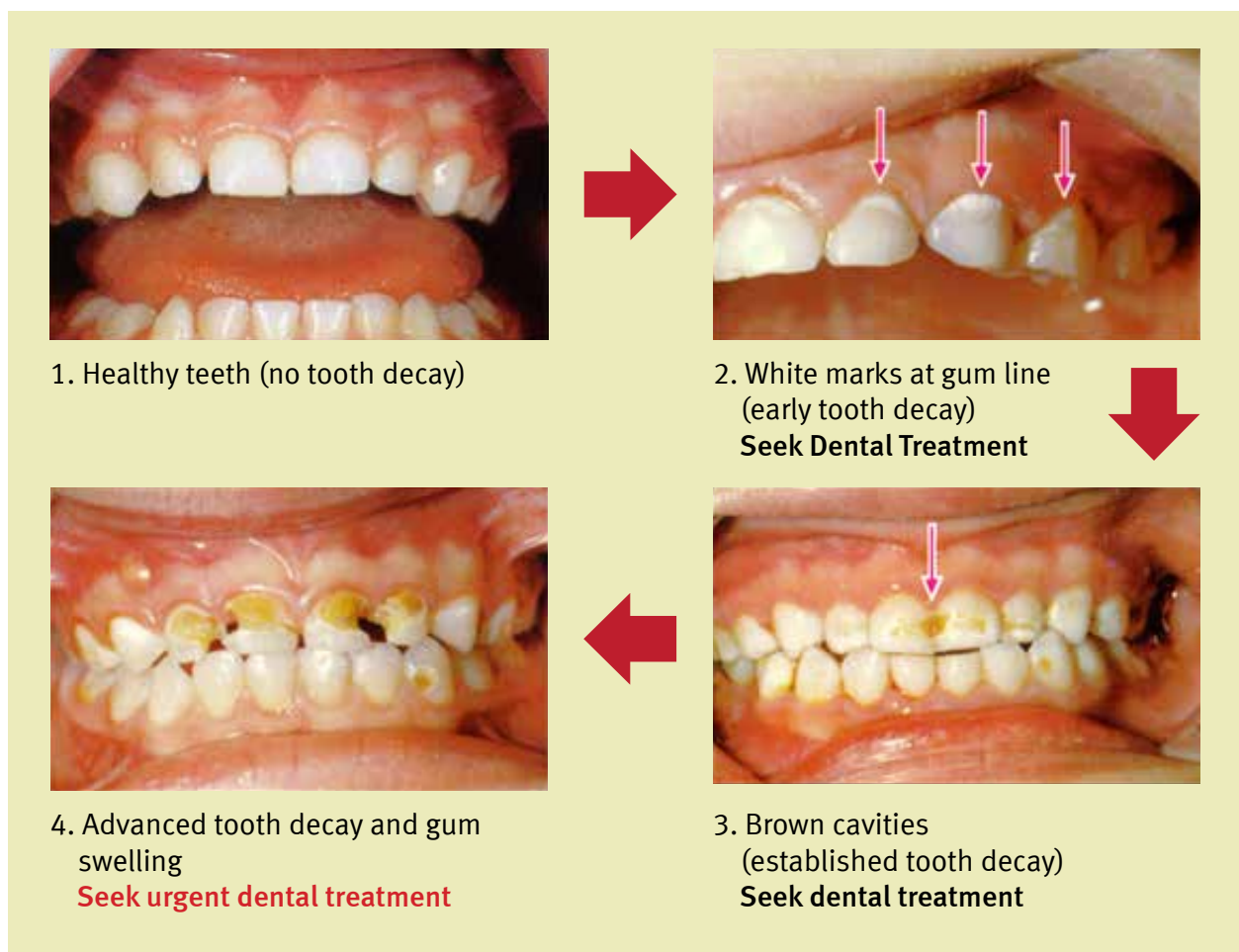


Image source: (https://www.dhsv.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/24952/DHSV_S4M_Toolkit.pdf)

Early tooth decay does not usually cause any symptoms. Often, the first sign of tooth decay is a brown or white mark on the teeth that does not rub off. If untreated, these marks progress to involve more of the tooth. Severe, untreated tooth decay may result in an infection of the pulp (nerve) of the tooth, which might appear as a “pimple” or swelling on the gums. This requires urgent dental treatment.



Stages of tooth decay. Images courtesy of Oral Health Services Tasmania.

How can we improve oral health in childhood?

Improving oral health outcomes requires a focus on healthy eating; good oral hygiene; regular access to dental services beginning in the infant years, and access to fluoride through community water supplies and oral health care products.⁶ The Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit enables early learning services to address oral health with children and families in a simple and positive way.

DID YOU KNOW TOOTH DECAY IS A PREVENTABLE DISEASE?

Preventing tooth decay

Drink well, eat well, clean well and stay well

There are 4 key behaviours to prevent tooth decay in early childhood. These are:



Drink well

Healthy drinks are important for healthy teeth and water is essential for good health. Fluoridated water also helps by strengthening, protecting and repairing tooth enamel.



Eat well

Children need a variety of healthy meals and snacks. Good nutrition is especially important for children because they require extra nutrients for growth, development and strong teeth. Not only is a well-nourished body essential for physical and emotional health, it also contributes to high self-esteem, self-confidence and readiness for learning.



Clean well

Toothbrushing should start as soon as the first tooth appears. Young children don't have the co-ordination needed to brush well, so parents/carers need to help clean children's teeth. Children will need help from an adult up until about 8 years of age. By 8, children should have developed sufficient toothbrushing skills to be able to brush without any help. However, even at this age, adults should regularly check that children are brushing effectively.



Stay well

Children should have their first dental check-up by their second birthday. Early identification of dental diseases is essential so problems can be treated before they become serious. Regular dental check-ups are important for children to feel comfortable, confident and relaxed.

DID YOU KNOW THE MAIN RISK FACTOR FOR TOOTH DECAY IN CHILDREN IS THE CONSUMPTION OF SUGARY FOOD AND DRINK?⁷

Remember, tooth decay is preventable



The Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit is structured around the 4 key behaviours to improve children's oral health (drink well, eat well, clean well and stay well).

The aim of the Program is to increase knowledge of how to prevent tooth decay in children aged 0-5 years and encourage the implementation of policies and practices that support good oral hygiene, healthy food and drink choices, and regular dental care.

The Happy Teeth Program has been developed to be flexible and is designed to be tailored in partnership with parents/carers. Happy Teeth provides resources and fun activities to help early learning services introduce oral hygiene into the daily routine for the children. It is recommended the Program be personalised to suit the early learning service, staff, parents/carers and children.

The Happy Teeth Program creates oral health promoting early learning services by influencing the key components of learning:

- the classroom
- facility policies and routines
- childcare staff and parents/carers.

The Happy Teeth Program Resource Kit contains:

- Educator resources: classroom activities, fact sheets, posters, stickers, songs and rhymes CD
- Resources to support a healthy environment: information on how to create healthy eating and oral health policy and how to set up a toothbrushing program
- Parent/carer resources: letters, newsletter items, toothbrushing calendar and brochures.

Working with parents/carers will help children create their own stories, maximise participation and enthusiasm.



Implementing a range of Happy Teeth Program strategies will help to improve children's oral health behaviour in the early learning service and home environment.

Role modelling

The role of adults in the Happy Teeth Program is one of direction, support and behaviour reinforcement through role modelling. Early learning services staff and parents/carers share the responsibility for children's positive oral hygiene development. Taking responsibility for their own oral hygiene makes them a great role model for the children in their care.

Young children learn by being around their parents/carers, by discussing what they are doing, or have done, what they intend doing, and by asking and answering questions. The Happy Teeth Program encourages staff to actively seek parents/carers involvement in their children's oral hygiene development, specifically to brush their child's teeth before arriving at the early learning service and again before bed.

Early learning services

Early learning services staff are key players in the Happy Teeth Program. It is important to encourage parents/carers to become involved and make Happy Teeth a regular daily activity through healthy eating, feeding practices and oral hygiene in the early learning service.

The Happy Teeth Program is designed to be flexible with the opportunity to expand on concepts and resources and implement strategies best suited to the early learning service.



Parents/carers

Parents/carers are the best role models for children and play an important role in the Happy Teeth Program. Their support with home oral hygiene is essential to good oral health development for children. Parents/carers can assist children to brush their teeth at home and support the drink well, eat well, clean well and stay well strategies.

Happy Teeth provides a range of resources and activities to engage parents/carers. There is a Happy Teeth letter to send home, newsletter items including access to healthy recipes and take-home resources to encourage parent/carer involvement.

Parents/carers are more likely to become active supporters of the Happy Teeth Program if they are given opportunities to be actively involved.

Dental practitioners

Dental practitioners can provide support and advice with:

- in-service training for early learning services staff implementing a toothbrushing program
- incorporating oral health education into the early learning service's curriculum
- general oral health information.

Contact a local dental practitioner to visit to the early learning service. For the nearest Queensland Health Oral Health Service Facility visit the Queensland Health website www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth or check the Yellow Pages for a private dentist.



For oral health promotion to be effective in the early learning service, it is recommended a healthy eating and oral health policy be implemented. This policy will help support accreditation (National Quality Standard – Quality Area 2) and ensure best practice within the facility.

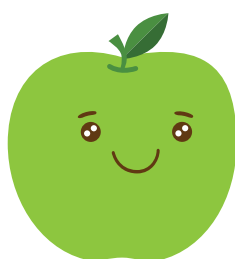
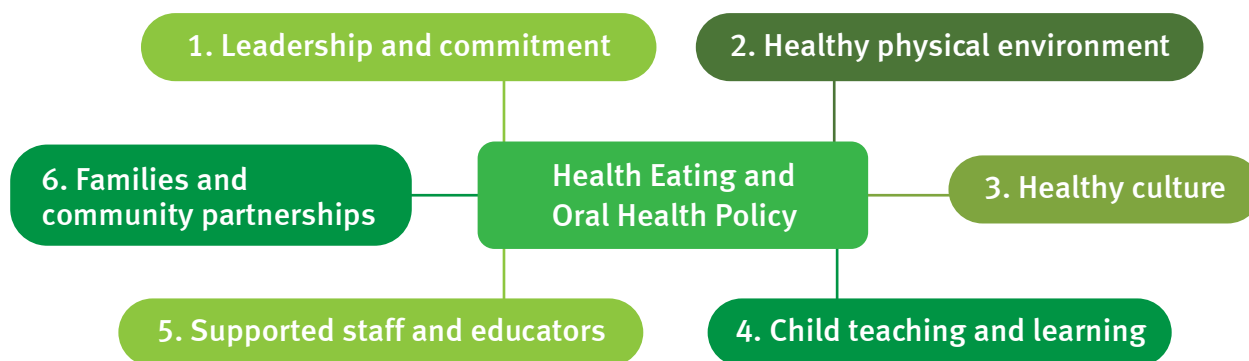
Food habits developed in early childhood are often retained throughout life. Healthy eating is important for children because they need extra nutrients for growth and development. A well-nourished body is essential for physical and emotional health and contributes to readiness for learning.

Evidence supports healthy food policies in early learning services helping to reduce tooth decay in early childhood.⁴

Developing a policy should be a team effort involving all early learning services staff and parents/carers. A sample letter is provided in the Educator resource section (p. 43) advising parents/carers about the proposed changes and encouraging them to be involved in the policy process.

Implementing a policy in the early learning service will ensure effective oral health and hygiene practices, including healthy food, are provided for children in care.

The key components of a healthy eating and oral health policy are:



A guide for developing this policy, Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy Checklist including suggested wording, is located in the Educator resource section (p.43). It is recommended the policy is tailored to reflect the needs and specific practises of the early learning service.

For further information on healthy eating visit:

Australian Dietary Guidelines

www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines

Get Up and Grow Healthy Eating Guidelines

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/get-up-grow-resource-order-guide

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority –

Promoting health eating and nutrition in education and care services

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/search?s=Promoting+healthy+eating+and+nutrition+in+education+and+care+services>

Healthier.Happier

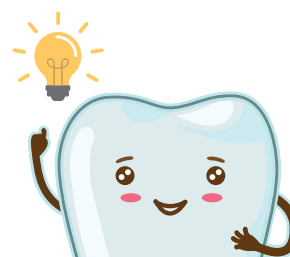
www.healthier.qld.gov.au

Nutrition Australia Queensland - Fact sheets and resources

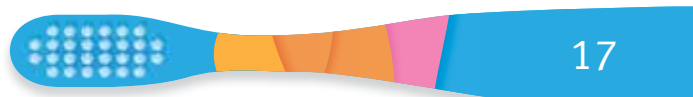
www.naqlld.org

FeedAustralia

www.feedaustralia.org.au/



Get parents/carers involved in developing the healthy eating and oral health policy.



Promoting drink well, eat well, clean well and stay well in early learning services



Key messages

- Breastfeed exclusively until baby is 6 months old.
- Never put sugary drinks in a bottle.
- Don't put a baby to sleep with a bottle.
- Toddlers and children should drink tap water as their regular drink throughout the day and at meal and snack times.
- Limit sometimes drinks – fruit drinks, flavoured milk, soft drinks, sports drinks and cordial.



Severe tooth decay is often caused by frequent drinks of sugary liquids. The Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines outline evidence-based age appropriate drink choices as follows:

Age appropriate drinks

Age	Recommended Practice
Birth-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breastmilk is best for babies, it contains all the important nutrients babies need.• Babies who are exclusively breastfed do not need any other drinks until they are around 6 months of age.• For babies not breastfeeding, use an infant formula until the baby is at least 12 months old.• For babies using a bottle, fill it with breastmilk or infant formula only. Do not put sugary drinks (such as juice, soft drink or cordial) in a bottle as these can cause tooth decay.• Avoid settling babies to sleep with a bottle.

6-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk should still be the baby's main drink. • Breastmilk or infant formula is still the most important drink during this time as babies will only be digesting small amounts of solid food. • Try introducing a cup at 6 months of age and aim to wean completely from a bottle by 12 months. • Only put breastmilk, formula or cooled, boiled water in a cup or bottle. Offering small amounts of water in a cup or water bottle will increase hydration and teaches the child valuable motor skills. • Cow's milk should be avoided before 12 months of age, as babies under this age cannot digest it well.
12 months+ and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water should be the main drink other than breastmilk or cow's milk. • Avoid sweet drinks like juices, flavoured milk, cordials and soft drinks as they are high in sugar. • Breastfeeding can be continued for as long as the parent and their toddler wish. • Infant formula is not needed after 12 months of age.





Learning experiences

Educators can share key 'drink well' messages with children through:

- Storytelling and narratives – Stories about drinking, water and milk.
- Everyday conversations – Snacks and meal times are an opportunity to sit with children and talk about healthy drinks and why they are important. Ask open ended questions: Where does water come from? Where does milk come from?
- Positive role modelling – Snacks and meal times provide a good opportunity to role model healthy drinking habits and talk about why they are important.

Talking points for children

Key messages:

- Water cleans your mouth. Water keeps your teeth and body healthy.
- When you are thirsty, water is the best drink. You should drink water every day.
- 'Sometimes' drinks have a lot of sugar. They can make holes in your teeth and make them sore.
- 'Sometimes' drinks are milk shakes, fruit juice, cordial and fizzy drinks. They should be kept for special occasions like birthday parties.
- When you are a big boy or girl you should drink out of a cup, not a baby bottle.

Key questions and answers:

Q Why should you drink water?

Answer: It helps to keep my body and teeth healthy. It helps to clean my mouth. Water is the drink I should have when I am thirsty.

Q Which drinks should you only drink sometimes?

Answer: Milk shakes, fruit juice, cordial and soft drinks.

Q Why can't you drink 'sometimes' drinks every day?

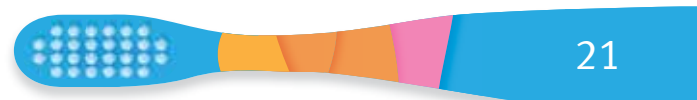
Answers: They have too much sugar. They can make holes in your teeth and make them sore.

Q When can you have 'sometimes' drinks?

Answer: Special occasions like birthday parties.

Q Who should drink out of a baby bottle?

Answer: Only little babies. Not big boys and girls.



Engaging parents and carers

Educators can support parents/carers to encourage 'drink well' by:

- Taking the opportunity to discuss how to 'drink well' with parents/carers:
 - ensure they are aware of the early learning service's drink requirements
 - encourage everyone in the family to drink water - children will see this and do it themselves.
 - have water on the table at meal and snack times.
 - keep chilled water in a jug in the fridge.
 - take filled water bottles when going out with your child.
- Providing parent/carer 'drink well' brochure.
- Including 'drink well' key messages in the early learning service's newsletter.
- Letting parents/carers know how much sugar sweet drinks contain by displaying 'Do you know the amount of sugar in common food items?' poster.
- Displaying information throughout the early learning service e.g. in the foyer and on noticeboards.
- Providing 'drink well' information at enrolment.
- Providing copies of the healthy eating and oral health policy at enrolment.
- Role modelling good oral health behaviours.

Create a healthy environment

- Support and provide a safe, private place for breastfeeding.
- Provide access to water for children to drink throughout the day. Consider cooled water for the warmer months.
- Encourage children to drink water when they are thirsty.
- Develop policies and procedures to demonstrate your commitment to healthy eating and oral health. Ensure the service has a healthy eating and oral health policy.



Policy alignment - drink well

National Quality Standard

Standard 2.1 – Each child’s health is promoted

Element 2.1.3 – Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

Standard 6.1 – Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

Element 6.1.1 – Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.

Standard 6.2 – Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Element 6.2.3 – The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 3 – Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

Happy Teeth Program supporting resources

Educator fact sheets

- No. 5 – Sugary drinks
- No. 6 – Hidden sugars in foods and drinks

Parent/carer brochure

- Drink well
- Preventing infant tooth decay

Classroom activities

- Healthy food game
- Shopping for everyday foods

Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy checklist

Newsletter items

- ‘Drink well’ key messages

More information

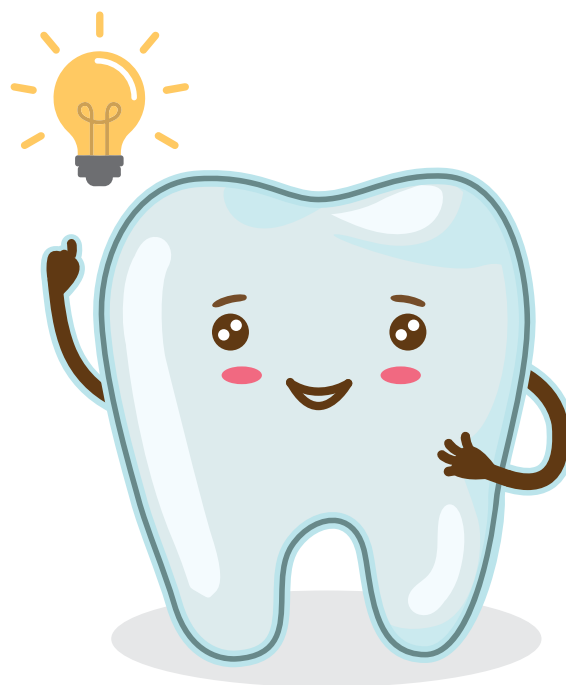
For further information and direct links to resources, visit the useful contacts and websites section or the Happy Teeth Program website - <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program>

Drink well case study - Mundubbera Kindergarten

Mundubbera Kindergarten located in the Wide Bay-Burnett region (200km west of Bundaberg) was experiencing challenges with children not drinking water. Only 50% of children were drinking water daily with many bringing water bottles from home filled with fruit juices, flavoured milks and even tea.

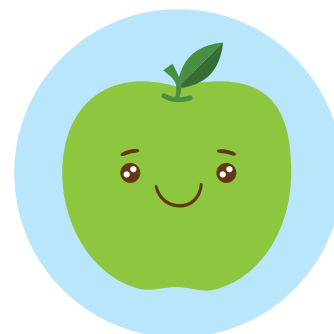
To help improve water consumption in the kindergarten, key messages were included in the service newsletter to educate parents/carers. The messages promoted the importance of drinking water and most importantly, only water to be placed in children's water bottles. To help support Mundubbera Kindergarten children to drink more water, individual cups were provided, and children were encouraged to help themselves to water throughout the day. Initially, there were some challenges such as the water taps being difficult for children to turn with their little hands, but this was soon fixed with the taps being changed. Furthermore, some of the children did not like the taste of the town water but thanks to a successful grant submission by Landmark to assist the kindergarten, this will soon change. The good news is a UV filtration system will be installed on the kindergarten tank and filtered drinking water will soon be readily available. Benita Littleton, Co-Director was quite excited about the successful tender and advised, "parents, children, staff and now local organisations are coming together to ensure water is our drink of choice at Kindy".

After a couple of months and a few simple strategies put in place, Mundubbera Kindergarten are now proud to report that 100% of their children are now drinking water daily and water bottles are filled only with water. This is a great achievement for Mundubbera Kindergarten!



Key messages

- Breastmilk is best for babies.
- Children need to eat a variety of healthy meals and snacks.
- Limit sometimes foods.
- Avoid adding sugar and salt.



The main preventable risk factor for tooth decay in children is the consumption of sugary foods and drinks². Eating healthy food and minimising snacks between meals can help reduce the risk of tooth decay. The Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines outline evidence-based age appropriate food choices as follows:

Age appropriate foods

Age	Recommended Practice
Birth-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk is best for babies, it contains all the important nutrients baby needs. • Breastfeeding is best for babies as it helps build a strong connection between mum and baby, helps the baby fight sickness and helps prevent health problems in the future. • If breastfeeding is not possible, parents and carers should use an infant formula until the baby is around 12 months of age.
6-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this age, babies start needing more nutrients and should commence the transition to first foods. • Continue breastfeeding or using infant formula while introducing first foods. • Babies should be introduced to different tastes and textures. Ensure foods do not have added sugar or salt. • Breastfeeding should continue until the baby is 12 months old, or for as long as both the mother and baby wish to continue.
12 months and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 12 months of age, toddlers should be eating regular meals every day, with a variety of appropriately textured and nutritious foods. • At this age, toddlers can have the same meals as the rest of the family, with some modifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Foods need to be prepared to avoid choking – Foods should not have added sugars or salt – Eating should be supervised at all times

12 months and older Cont.

- Infant formula is not required after 12 months of age. Toddlers can have full-cream cow's milk.
- Be careful not to let toddlers fill up on too much milk as this may mean missing out on other important foods.
- Offer full-cream milk in a cup instead of a bottle and aim for no more than 500ml a day.
- Breastfeeding can continue for as long as the mother and child like.
- Offer regular meals and small snacks – small children have small tummies!

Tips for introducing first foods

- Introduce first foods at around 6 months of age, but not before 4 months.
- Introduce one food at a time – start with foods high in iron. For example: cereals with added iron (e.g. rice cereal), cooked and pureed meat, poultry, fish, tofu and legumes.
- Around 8 months of age, introduce a variety of nutritious foods from the 5 Food Groups as described in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*:
 - **Meat and meat alternatives** – opt for lean meats trimmed of any fat. For example: pureed tuna or salmon, flaked fish, well cooked eggs, strips of cooked chicken, small meat balls, hummus and nut paste/butter.
 - **Vegetables** – ensure hard vegetables are cooked until soft and then pureed or mashed. For example: pureed pumpkin, mashed sweet potato, cucumber slices, tomato slices or soft vegetable sticks.
 - **Fruit** – choose soft fruits or cook hard fruits until soft. For example: pureed pear, mashed banana, mashed avocado, mango cubes, chopped strawberries, mandarin pieces, grapes cut in half, plums and nectarines (with the skins and stones removed).
 - **Dairy** – choose full cream products for toddlers younger than 2 years of age. For example: natural yoghurt, fruit mixed with yoghurt, cheese slices, grated cheese, cottage cheese and tzatziki.
 - **Grains and cereals** – Choose wholegrain or high fibre options. For example: baby rice cereal, oats (porridge), toast fingers and soft cooked pasta.
- **Avoid adding sugar or salt to foods.**

How to safely introduce first foods

- Always supervise children when eating and prepare food to avoid choking hazards: avoid hard, round or stick solid foods before 12 months of age.
- Foods with a high risk of choking include whole nuts, seeds, raw carrot, celery sticks and chunks of apple (for babies under 12 months). Reduce the risk of choking by making sure children sit while eating.



Learning experiences

Educators can share key 'eat well' messages with children through:

- Storytelling and narratives – Read stories about healthy food, shopping, markets, gardening, cooking and picture books of food from other cultures. For older children read books about growing own foods and where food sources come from.
- Music – Sing songs about healthy food (CD and words provided in this resource).
- Role play – Going to the market to select and buy healthy food.
- Everyday conversations – Snack and mealtimes are an opportunity to sit with children and talk about healthy eating and what foods are healthy.
- Home corner/pretend area – Have a variety of pretend food and divide food into 'sometimes' and 'everyday' foods. Turn the home corner into a café, restaurant or supermarket.

Talking points for children

Key messages:

- You need food to help your body grow, play and think. Just like a car needs petrol to move, you need food to help you move.
- 'Everyday' foods can be eaten everyday because they are good for you. They give you energy, so you can grow, play, think and learn.
- 'Everyday' foods are fresh fruit, cheese, vegetables, sandwiches and soups.
- 'Sometimes' foods have a lot of sugar.
- Sugar can make holes in your teeth and make them sore.
- 'Sometimes' foods are lollies, biscuits, cakes, chocolate and muesli bars.

Key questions and answers:

Q Why do we need food?

Answer: Food helps our body to grow, play and think. Just like a car needs petrol to move, I need food to help me move.

Q What foods should you eat everyday to help your bodies grow, play, think and learn?

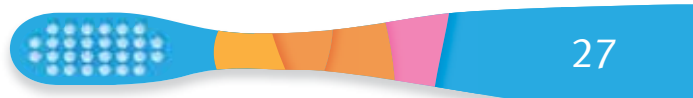
Answer: Fruit, vegetables, cheese and bread.

Q What are 'sometimes' foods?

Answer: Lollies, biscuits, cakes, muesli bars and chocolate.

Q Why can't you eat 'sometimes' food every day?

Answer: They have too much sugar. They can make holes in my teeth and make them sore.



Engaging parents/carers

Educators can support parents/carers to encourage 'eat well' by:

- Taking the opportunity to discuss how to 'eat well' with parents/carers:
 - ensure parents/carers are aware of the early learning services food requirements
 - let families know the healthy foods that are being served in the service and share menu ideas.
- Providing parent/carer 'eat well' brochure.
- Including 'eat well' key messages and healthy recipes in the early learning services newsletter.
- Letting parents know how much sugar sweet foods contain by displaying 'Do you know the amount of sugar in common food items?' poster.
- Displaying information in the services foyer and/or noticeboard.
- Providing 'eat well' information at enrolment.
- Providing the healthy eating and oral health policy at enrolment.
- Role modelling good eating behaviours.
- Inviting health professionals such as a dental practitioner, child health nurse, dietitian or nutritionist to speak at information sessions for families and carers. Ask them for tips on implementing a toothbrushing program or developing a healthy eating and oral health policy.

Create a healthy environment

- Develop menus with a range of healthy foods – www.feedaustralia.org.au
- Develop policies and procedures to demonstrate your commitment to healthy eating and oral health. Ensure the service has a healthy eating and oral health policy.

Policy alignment – eat well

National Quality Standard

Standard 2.1 – Each child's health is promoted

Element 2.1.3 – Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

Standard 6.1 – Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

Element 6.1.1 – Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.

Standard 6.2 – Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Element 6.2.3 – The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 3 – Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

Happy Teeth supporting resources

Educator fact sheet

- No. 4 – Foods for babies and toddlers
- No. 6 – Hidden sugars in foods and drinks

Parent/carer brochure

- Eat well

Classroom activities

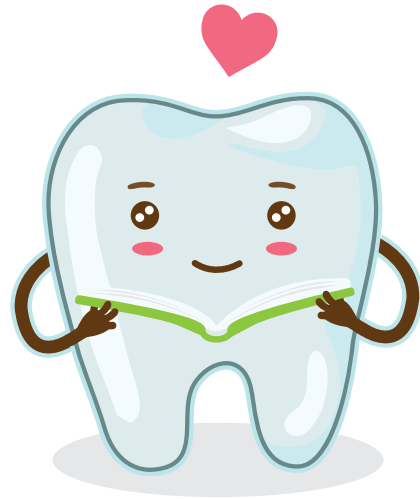
- Healthy food game
- Shopping for everyday foods

Newsletter items

- ‘Eat well’ key messages
- Healthy recipes

Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy checklist

Songs and rhymes USB



More information

For further information and direct links to resources, visit the useful contacts and websites section or the Happy Teeth Program website: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program>

Eat well case study – Flamingo Family Day Care

Flamingo Family Day Care Service Roadvale located in the Scenic Rim Region are committed to promoting healthy eating within their service.

A range of strategies have been implemented to improve children’s eating habits. Staff members educate the children on healthy eating by singing songs, storytelling and having everyday conversations about healthy eating habits. These activities are reinforced through pictures on display and children’s active involvement in growing fruit and vegetables at the service. Healthy eating information is also provided to the parents/carers. This is to help support families to continue healthy habits at home so that children are consistently consuming healthy food both at home and within the service.

Service Director Renee Blake was happy to advise ‘there have been some great changes taking place within our service’. Changes include; more healthy food options provided in lunch boxes, children drinking more water and less juice, and the children seem to have much more energy!

Key messages

- Baby teeth need to be cleaned as soon as they appear.
- Children need help from an adult with toothbrushing until they are around 8 years old.
- Clean teeth twice daily with a small (pea sized) amount of age-appropriate fluoride toothpaste.
- Toothpaste that contains fluoride helps protect teeth against decay.
- Developing good oral health habits from an early age helps prevent problems in later life.



WHY IS TOOTHBRUSHING SO CRITICAL?

To have strong, healthy teeth for life, plaque needs to be removed daily to prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Toothbrushing is the best way to remove plaque. The fluoride in toothpaste also repairs and protects tooth surfaces.



Toothbrushing should start from as soon as the first tooth appears. As younger children haven't developed the coordination to brush well, parents/carers need to clean children's teeth. Children need help from an adult to brush until they are around 8 years of age. However, as children grow, they should learn how to clean their own teeth effectively, so that by around 8 years of age they are skilled at brushing on their own. Even at this age, adults should regularly check that children are brushing effectively.

Regular toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste is the best way to prevent tooth decay and gum disease. There is evidence that children's teeth are not cleaned enough. A Royal Children's Hospital National survey reported 1 in 3 children don't brush their teeth enough while 13% of the parents held the misbelief that children only need to brush their teeth if they eat sugary foods⁵.

Age appropriate oral hygiene practices

Age	Recommended Practice
6 months (or as soon as teeth appear) -18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When teeth first appear, clean with a small, soft toothbrush moistened with water. • Clean teeth twice daily (after the morning feed and before sleep at night). • Toothpaste is not required before 18 months of age. • If a toothbrush isn't tolerated, parents/carers can wipe the teeth using a moist wash cloth or piece of gauze. • At this age, babies and toddlers should be held or sit on a parent/ carers lap for toothbrushing.
18 months – 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean teeth twice daily (morning and night) with a small, soft toothbrush. • Use a pea-sized amount of low fluoride toothpaste on the toothbrush (unless otherwise advised by a dental practitioner or health professional). • Children should not dispense toothpaste or be allowed to eat or lick toothpaste. • Encourage children to spit out toothpaste after brushing. • Parents/carers should continue to brush children's teeth. Allow children to "practise" brushing first but ensure that this is followed by an adult thoroughly brushing all teeth.
6 years and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean teeth twice daily (morning and night) with a small, soft toothbrush. • Use a pea-sized amount of regular strength toothpaste on the toothbrush. • Ensure toothpaste is kept out of reach of children. • Encourage children to spit out toothpaste after brushing. • Parents/carers should continue to help with brushing until children are around 8 years of age.



Learning experiences

Educators can share key ‘clean well’ messages with children through:

- Storytelling and narratives – stories about toothbrushing and why we have teeth.
- Music – sing songs (CD and words provided in this resource).
- Everyday conversations - snack and mealtimes are an opportunity to sit with children and talk about what teeth do, why we should look after teeth, why we need healthy teeth and gums, what you did this morning and discussions about brushing your teeth.
- Intentional learning activities – invite your local dental service to talk to children about the importance of brushing their teeth.

Talking points for children

Key messages:

- Cleaning your teeth with toothpaste makes your teeth strong and healthy – and you only need a little bit, about the size of a pea.
- If you don’t clean your teeth they can get holes in them and that makes them sore.
- A big person like mummy or daddy needs to help you brush your teeth.
- Your teeth need to be brushed with toothpaste every morning after breakfast and every night before you go to bed.
- You should spit out the toothpaste after you finish brushing.

Key questions and answers:

Q What do you do to help your teeth stay strong and healthy?

Answer: Eat healthy food and drink water. Clean my teeth.

Q What can happen to your teeth if you don’t clean them?

Answer: I can get holes in them and that makes them sore.

Q What do you put on a toothbrush?

Answer: Toothpaste

Q How much toothpaste should you have on your toothbrush?

Answer: Size of a pea

Q When should you clean your teeth?

Answer: In the morning after breakfast and at night before I go to bed.

Q What do you do after you finish cleaning your teeth?

Answer: Spit out the toothpaste.

Q Who should help you brush your teeth?

Answer: A big person like mummy or daddy.

Engaging parents and carers

Educators can support parents/carers to encourage 'clean well' at home by:

- Promoting the new Happy Teeth and Toothbrushing program. Provide the Toothbrushing Program letter to encourage involvement.
- Having a Happy Teeth Program information session during Dental Health Week (first full week of August) to raise awareness of the program and importance of oral hygiene to prevent tooth decay. For further information or promotional resources visit the Australian Dental Association website: www.ada.org.au/Dental-Health-Week/Home.
- Encouraging parents/carers to share any oral hygiene developments they have noticed in their child at home.
- Including 'clean well' key messages in the early learning services newsletter.
- Encouraging the toothbrush calendar to be used at home to help establish a toothbrushing routine.
- Providing 'clean well' and preventing infant tooth decay parent/carer brochures.

Creating a healthy environment

- Implement a toothbrushing program to reinforce good oral hygiene and the 'clean well' messages.
- Develop policies and procedures to demonstrate your commitment to healthy eating and oral health. Ensure the service has an oral health policy.

Policy alignment - clean well

National Quality Standard

Standard 2.1 – Each child's health is promoted.

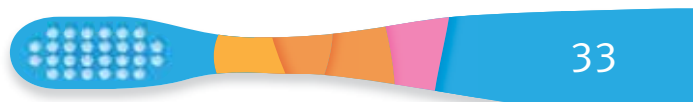
Element 2.1.2 – Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented

Standard 6.2 – Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

(collaboration with Oral Health Services).

Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 3 – Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.



Happy Teeth Program supporting resources

Educator fact sheet

- No. 7 – Fluoride
- No. 8 – Brushing children's teeth

Parent/carer brochure

- Preventing infant tooth decay
- Clean well

Classroom activities

- Can you help Jenny get the toothpaste to her toothbrush?
- Can you help James get the toothpaste to his toothbrush?
- Toothbrush calendar

Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy checklist

Letters to parents/carers

- Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy information
- Toothbrushing Program



Introducing tooth care

Educator to sit with a group of a small group.

The educator to talk about the children's teeth and how to look after them. The children are encouraged to open wide and show all their 'Stevie Strongteeth' and to practise a 'wide open smile'.

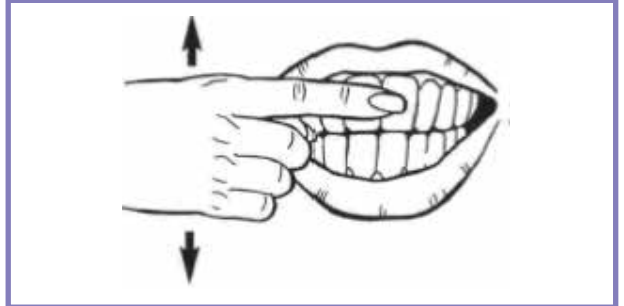
The discussion finishes with the educator singing 'Here's a tooth in your mouth' with the children (See Songs and rhymes USB – No. 18)

(Tune: Here's a House with a Wall)

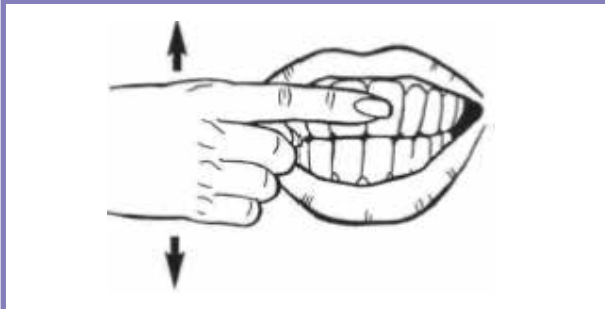
1. Here's a tooth in your mouth, in your mouth, in your mouth (point to teeth).



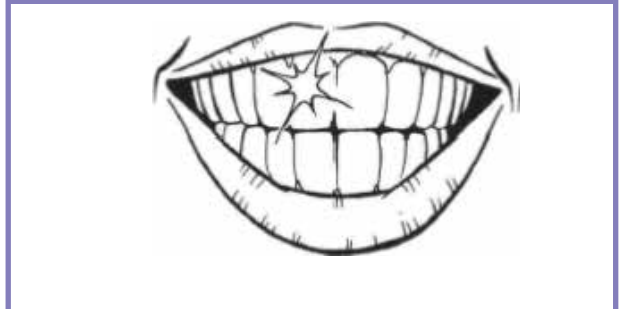
2. Here's a brush for your teeth, for your teeth, for your teeth (hold pointer finger horizontally to mouth).



3. We can brush, brush, brush after lunch, lunch, lunch (move pointer finger up and down in front of mouth).



4. Our teeth are shining bright, shining bright, our teeth are shining bright (show a wide-open smile).



Happy Teeth Program supporting resources

Educator fact sheet

No. 8 - Brushing children's teeth

Setting up a toothbrushing program

Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy checklist

Newsletter items

- Clean well key messages

Songs and rhymes USB

Toothbrush calendar for parents/carers

More information

Toothbrushing Model with Toothbrush

A great model for teaching children about the importance of teeth and effective toothbrushing.

Approximately 8cm across at the back of the mouth, 7cm deep from front teeth to back centre and 6cm high. Ages 3+



Teeth Cleaning Teaching Model with Tooth Brush
Dentist Tooth Cleaning - Online Shop
a2zmontessori.com.au

For further information and direct links to resources, visit the useful contacts and websites section or the Happy Teeth Program website -

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program>



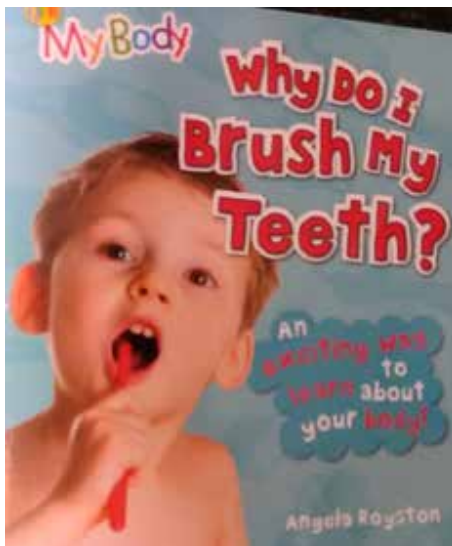
Clean well case study - Murgon Child Care

Murgon Child Care and Learning Centre are proud to promote 'Clean well' in their service to children including parents/carers. The service Director, Haylene J van Rensburg said "it is important to educate children about oral hygiene and ensure our key messages are transferred to the home environment through pamphlets, emails and newsletters to the parents".

Some 'Clean well' strategies implemented at Murgon Child Care and Learning Centre include staff using YouTube footage as a visual to teach children about oral hygiene. Each day during meal times staff discuss with children the importance of healthy eating and what will happen if they don't look after their teeth. Furthermore, children are encouraged to rinse their mouths after every mealtime and this practice is working well.

There have been some challenges with several children bringing unhealthy options such as lollies and sugary foods in their lunchboxes. This is a good opportunity for staff to discuss with children how healthy foods will help keep teeth healthy. Children also enjoy the opportunity to participate in fun activities to promote healthy teeth by choosing the correct foods and even get to practice toothbrushing on a large set of teeth.

Murgon Child Care and Learning Centre Director, Haylene, believes promoting 'Clean well' within their service has many positive effects including children's oral hygiene practices. The good news is, the key information provided to parents/carers has helped them to take oral hygiene practices to heart by ensuring their children are brushing their teeth at home.



Key messages

- Parents/carers to check children's teeth regularly for signs of tooth decay.
- First dental check-up by second birthday.
- Access public dental clinics – check with local area and set up referral network.
- Ensure the whole family has good oral health.
- Tooth decay in its early stages may produce no symptoms.
- Regular dental check-ups are important for minor problems to be detected and treated at an early stage before they become serious. A survey conducted by the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne reported that 1 in 4 (23%) Australian parents believed children only need to see a dentist if they have a problem with their teeth. Half of the parents were not aware of the free dental services that may be available to their children⁵.



Recommended practices for parents/carers

Check child's teeth for signs of tooth decay:

- Decay can start in baby teeth soon after they appear and progress quickly.
- Get into the habit of checking your child's teeth regularly for early signs of tooth decay. (See page 11 for 'Stages of decay').
- Decay looks like brown or white marks on the teeth that do not rub off. Also check the gums for signs of swelling or infection (pus or a "pimple" in the mouth).
- Make a dental appointment promptly if your child has possible tooth decay or another problem with their mouth.

Take your child for their first dental check-up by their second birthday:

- To help find any dental problems early and help your child to feel comfortable with having teeth checked.
- Your child may be eligible for a free dental check-up at a public dental clinic.
- Your child may also be eligible for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) which provides up to \$1000 in benefits for basic dental services.
- If child is not eligible for free public dental care or the CDBS, seek care from a private dental practitioner. Private dental practitioners charge fees that may be reimbursed by private health cover.

Tips for a positive first dental visit:

- Let the child watch parent/carer or an older sibling have a dental check-up.
- Schedule appointments for the morning so tiredness is not a problem.
- Talk about what will happen at the dentist. For example: counting teeth and learning to care for them.
- If the child is unsure, have them sit on the parent/carer's lap in the dental chair for a dental check-up.
- Avoid using words such as “drill” or “needle”.
- Let the dental team know of any medical condition or past-experience that might affect the child's behaviour.
- Dental practitioners are trained to make children feel comfortable and ensure first visits are a positive experience.

Accessing public dental clinics:

- In Queensland, adult residents eligible for Medicare who hold a Health Care Card or Pension Card can access public dental services.
- All Queensland resident children eligible for Medicare who are 4 years of age or older who have not completed Year 10 or secondary school, or are eligible for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule are able to access public dental services. Children younger than 4 years or have completed Year 10 are also eligible for this service if they are dependents of current concession card holders or hold a current concession card themselves. Parents can also take their children to a private dentist of their choice at their own cost.
- Public dental services are offered free of charge to eligible residents.
- For more information on accessing public dental clinics for children, visit www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth

Ensure the whole family has good oral health:

- Babies are born without the bacteria (germs) in their mouth that causes tooth decay.
- Bacteria can be passed to newborn babies if bottles or dummies are “cleaned” by a parent/carer in their own mouth before passing to baby. Sharing spoons is also a common way for decay-causing bacteria to be passed to babies.
- If baby uses a dummy, have spares on hand and sterilise or clean them in hot soapy water.
- Look after the oral health of the family to avoid spreading decay-causing bacteria to babies by brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and visiting the dentist regularly.
- It is important that parents/carers discuss the frequency of check-ups with their child's dental practitioner. Each child will have different health needs and risk levels.
- Each family member should have their own toothbrush and replace it every 3 to 4 months.



Learning experiences

Educators can share ‘stay well’ messages with children through:

- Storytelling and narratives – Read stories about visiting the dentist.
- Music – Sing songs about the dentist (USB and words in this resource).
- Everyday conversations – Explain that a dentist is a person who can help keep their teeth strong and healthy and visiting the dentist is a part of taking care of their teeth.
- Intentional learning activities – invite your local dental service to talk to children about what happens when they visit the dentist.

Talking points for children

Key messages:

- Visiting the dentist helps to keep your teeth healthy.
- Dentists are special people who help you to look after your teeth.
- You should have your teeth checked by a dentist before your second birthday.
- You have 20 teeth by the time you are 3 years old.
- Your mum and dad can lift up your lip to check your teeth are clean and look for tooth decay.

Key questions and answers:

Q How many teeth do you have once you are 3 years old?

Answer: 20.

Q Has anyone visited the dentist?

Q What do dentists do?

Answers: Help me look after my teeth. Look at my teeth. Count my teeth.

Q How can mum or dad check your teeth?

Answer: By lifting my lip to look for tooth decay.

Engaging parents/carers

Educators can support parents/carers to encourage ‘stay well’ by:

- Providing ‘First dental visit’ parent/carer brochure.
- Including ‘stay well’ key messages in the early learning services newsletter.
- Displaying information in the foyer and/or noticeboard.
- Provide ‘stay well’ information at enrolment.

Creating a healthy environment

- Develop policies and procedures to demonstrate your commitment to healthy eating and oral health. Ensure the service has a healthy eating and oral health policy.

Policy alignment – stay well

National Quality Standard

Standard 6.1 – Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

Element 6.1.1 – Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.

Standard 6.2 – Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Element 6.2.3 – The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 3 - Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

Children take increasing responsibility of their own health and physical wellbeing.

Happy Teeth Program supporting resources

Educator fact sheets

- No. 9 – Regular dental checks
- No. 10 – Dental accidents: what to do

Parent/carer brochures

- First dental visit
- Keeping teeth and gums healthy during pregnancy

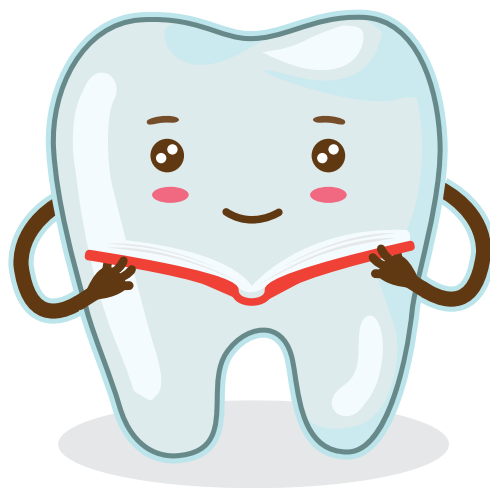
Classroom activities

- Dentist story board
- Dentist pattern
- Dentist clothes
- Help the dentist to get ready to check Andrea’s teeth
- Dentist coast pattern

Newsletter items

- ‘Stay well’ key messages

Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy checklist



More information

For further information and direct links to resources, visit the useful contacts and websites section or the Happy Teeth Program website -

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program>

Stay well case study – Wandilla Magic Childcare Centre

Wandilla Magic Childcare Centre at Loganholme understands the importance of ‘Stay well’ for children attending their service. The service has implemented a range of strategies to promote visiting the dentist to the children including parents/carers. Strategies include making ‘Stay well’ part of everyday conversations with children, stories, posters placed around the service including information for families.

Wandilla Magic Childcare Centre at Loganholme joined forces with their local Metro South Oral Health Service by holding a free ‘Healthy Mouth Day’ with their kindergarten group. Children were provided with a free dental check-up by Oral Health Services staff. Centre Director, Daniella Bryant said ‘it was a fun day to remind both children and parents that visiting the dentist helps to keep their teeth healthy’.

As a result of promoting ‘Stay well’ to Wandilla Magic Childcare Centre children and parents/carers, the service is proud to advise they have raised more awareness of dental health and oral hygiene, community services, and free dental services within their local community.



Educator resources



Fact sheet 1: Thumbsucking and dummies

Sucking on dummies (pacifiers), fingers or thumbs or another object such as a blanket, are common comforting behaviours in babies and young children. The need to suck generally lessens with age and should stop as children get older, either by themselves or with the support of parent/carers.

Dummy safety

There are advantages and disadvantages to using a dummy to comfort and settle babies. If parents/carers choose to use a dummy it is important that the dummy is:

- in good condition
- has no ribbons or chains
- has holes in the plastic holder for quick, easy removal in an emergency
- only used to settle a baby and not put them to sleep.

Dummies sold in Australia must comply with mandatory Australian Safety Standards. Dummies should not be attached to a cot or tied around a child's neck as this is a strangulation hazard.

Dummies and teeth

Parents/carers may be concerned about using a dummy or thumbsucking and the impact on teeth. Using a dummy does not significantly impact the alignment of the teeth if use is stopped by 2-3 years of age.

Dummy use or thumbsucking as children get older (beyond 4-5 years of age) can cause problems with the alignment of the teeth and jaws, including:

- front top and bottom teeth not touching (open bite)
- top teeth sitting in front of the lower teeth (over jet)
- misalignment of the upper and lower back teeth (cross-bite).

It is possible for these changes to correct naturally if dummy or thumbsucking ceases before the adult (permanent) teeth appear.



Dummy do's and don'ts

If parents/carers choose to use a dummy, they should:

- ✓ have plenty of spare, clean dummies on hand
- ✓ sterilize or clean dummies in the dishwasher or in hot, soapy water
- ✓ wean off the dummy before the adult teeth start to appear
- ✗ don't clean a dropped dummy by licking it or "cleaning" it in the mouth. Sharing saliva with a baby can increase the risk of tooth decay if a parent/carer has untreated tooth decay in their own mouth.
- ✗ never dip the dummy in sweet substances, such as honey, jam or condensed milk. This increases the risk of tooth decay.

Strategies to stop dummy use or thumbsucking

Suggestions to give parents/carers to change a child's habits:

- only give the child a dummy at sleep time
- remove the dummy once the child is asleep
- discourage the child from walking around with the dummy or thumb in their mouth.
- do not allow children to chew on items during rest/sleep time

If the child still has a dummy or a thumbsucking habit at around 2½ to 3 years of age, make a date by which the child will have to give up the habit – say the child's fourth birthday. Talk to the child, parent/carer about giving it up and work towards reducing the time the child has the dummy or sucks their thumb. It is important that this is reinforced at child care. By their fourth birthday, the child may be prepared to stop the habit.

Parents/carers who are concerned about their children's bite, dummy or thumb sucking habit should speak to a dental practitioner for more information and support to stop the habit.



Fact sheet 2: Baby teeth and teething

Healthy baby (deciduous) teeth

Baby teeth begin forming at approximately 6 weeks during pregnancy. Baby teeth are made up of minerals (calcium and phosphorus) which are supplied by the mother's blood stream during pregnancy. It is a myth that calcium is removed from the mother's teeth during pregnancy.

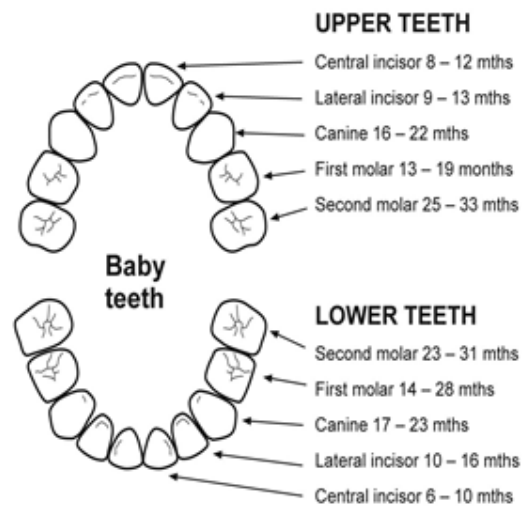
It is important that pregnant women consume enough calcium during pregnancy for their babies to form strong teeth and bones.

Timing for baby teeth

Baby teeth start to erupt at approximately 6 months of age. By 3 years of age, children have a full set of 20 baby teeth. The timing and order that baby teeth appear in the mouth can vary greatly between children. Below is an image of the approximate ages that baby teeth may appear in the mouth.

Healthy teeth for life

Some baby teeth are in the mouth for up to 12 years before they are replaced by adult (permanent) teeth. Baby teeth are just as important as adult teeth.



Healthy baby teeth:

- enable normal development of the jaws and permanent teeth
- maintain space for permanent teeth
- enable children to eat nutritious fibrous foods with a variety of textures
- assist development of good speech including the 'S' sound
- assist in the development of a positive self-image.

The early loss of baby teeth due to tooth decay can cause pain and discomfort for children. Keeping baby teeth free of tooth decay is linked to better oral health as children grow and become adults.

Teething

Teething (eruption of baby teeth through the gums) may cause babies and toddlers some discomfort. Common signs of teething:

- red, swollen gums
- increased dribbling
- irritability and restlessness
- fist or finger sucking or rubbing gums
- flushed cheeks or raised temperature.

Teething does not usually cause high fevers. If a baby or toddler has a fever and/or is ill, parents/carers should seek medical advice.

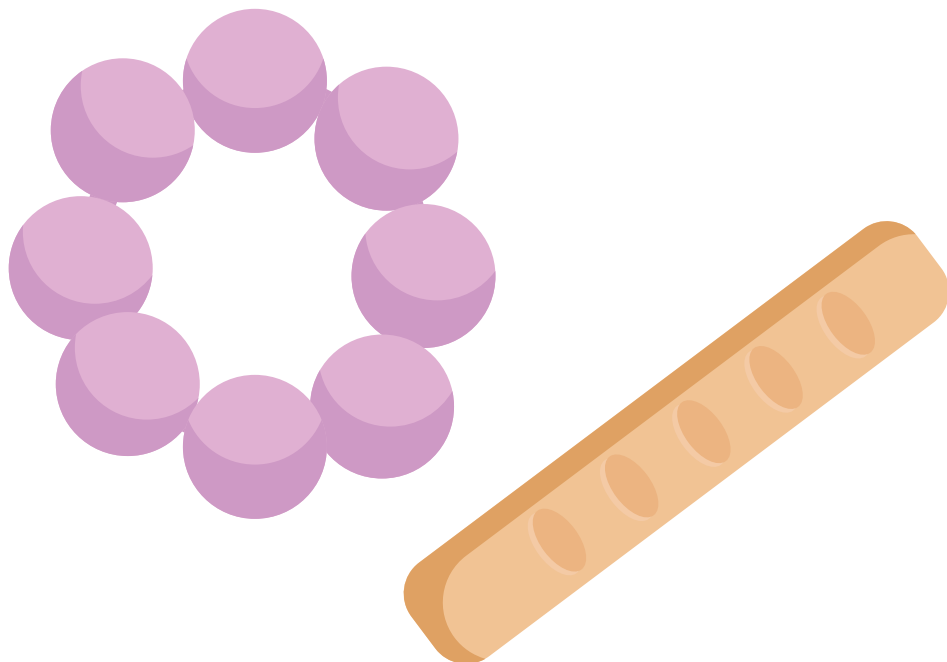
Ear infection, throat infections and other illnesses are often mistaken for teething and can lead to delays in seeking medical advice.

Managing teething problems

Mild teething discomfort may be eased by:

- chewing on chilled teething rings
- chewing on crusts of bread, chilled fruits or vegetables (e.g. cucumber) or sugar and salt free rusks
- gently rubbing the gums with a clean finger
- using a paediatric analgesic - these should not be used without medical advice.

Dummies are not very effective for teething problems.



Fact sheet 3: Tooth decay

What is tooth decay?

Tooth decay, also known as dental caries, can lead to holes or damage to teeth.

Tooth decay can start as soon as teeth appear and progress very quickly in baby teeth because they are smaller and less mineralised than adult teeth.

The first sign of tooth decay may be 'white marks' on the teeth, usually near the gum line. At this early stage, it is still possible to repair the damage through good oral hygiene and the use of fluoride products. If left untreated, a white mark may become a hole (cavity) which requires treatment by a dental practitioner.

What causes tooth decay?

Tooth decay can occur from the bacteria in dental plaque converting the sugars we eat into acid.

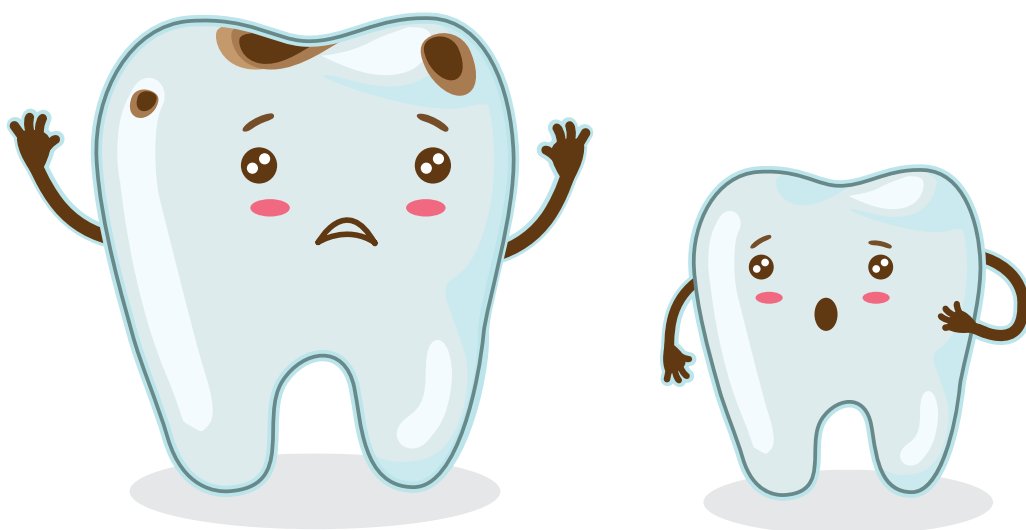
Acid attacks the tooth enamel, causing minerals to be lost from the surface. Saliva works to replace the lost minerals from teeth and helps the enamel to 'recover' from this acid attack.

This acid attack and recovery happens every time we eat or drink. Tooth decay (holes or cavities) occurs when the 'acid attack' outweighs the 'recovery'. This is why frequently consuming sugary foods and drinks causes tooth decay.

Limiting sugar intake and allowing enough time between meals will help saliva repair the attacked tooth surfaces.

Fluoride assists in the acid attack recovery process as it makes the tooth structure stronger and more resistant to acid attack.

The most effective sources of fluoride for young children are fluoride toothpaste and fluoridated water.



Fact sheet 4: Foods for babies and toddlers

Early learning services can positively instil healthy eating habits in children. Food can influence both oral health and general health outcomes for children. Supporting children to enjoy a variety of nutritious foods and limiting ‘sometimes’ foods that are high in saturated fat, added sugars and added salt will help protect their teeth as well as support their growth and development.

Breastfeeding

From birth to around 6 months of age, breastmilk is recommended as the best food for babies as it provides all the nutrients a baby needs. Breastfeeding has many benefits, including protection against infection and disease and the promotion of optimal jaw and tooth development through suckling.

If breastfeeding is not possible, parents/carers should use an infant formula until a baby is around 12 months of age.

First foods

First foods (solids or family foods) should be introduced at around 6 months of age, but not before 4 months.

Exercise caution when introducing foods to ensure that the food chosen is of a suitable texture for the child’s age and development. Foods high in iron should be the first foods introduced. These can include:

- Iron-fortified baby cereal. Make into a smooth puree by adding breast milk or formula and mixing.
- Well-cooked and pureed meat, poultry and fish (with no bones) and eggs. You can also add water and/or cooked vegies like potato, sweet potato, pumpkin and carrot. Blend until smooth.
- Cooked and pureed legumes, beans or tofu. Examples include baked beans (with no added salt), chickpeas, butter beans, red kidney beans and lentils. You can also add water and/or cooked vegetables like potato, sweet potato, pumpkin and carrot. Blend until smooth.

Foods and drinks to avoid

- Some foods and drinks can make babies sick as they are not ready to digest them. Do not give babies:
 - Honey (if younger than 12 months)
 - Raw milk (unpasteurised)
 - Cow's milk (if younger than 12 months) but can be used as an ingredient mixed into a meal
 - Skim or fat-free milk
 - Other milks (like soy, goat's, sheep's, coconut or almond)
 - Fruit juice (baby juices marketed as being safe for babies 6 months and over are not recommended as they are high in sugar, cause dental decay and contribute to childhood obesity)
 - Cordial, soft drinks or energy drinks
 - Teas, herbal drinks, coffee or drinking chocolate
 - Whole nuts (nut paste only)
 - Salt and salty foods, including processed meats, stock, soy sauce or canned foods with added salt. Never add salt to baby's food.

Supervise babies and children when eating

It is important to remember that while toddlers have front teeth to bite off food, they may not have back molar teeth to grind their food before swallowing. Their ability to swallow may not be fully developed.

Around 2 to 2 ½ years, all baby molar teeth should have erupted into the mouth, thereby enabling a child to chew and grind foods.

As children develop individually, their ability to chew and swallow can vary greatly, so regardless of age, all children should be supervised when eating to prevent choking.

Tooth protective foods

Research shows that some foods contain protective factors against tooth decay. Dairy foods contain casein, which is a protein that coats teeth and protects against acids formed in plaque. Including age-appropriate dairy-based snacks helps protect teeth against tooth decay.

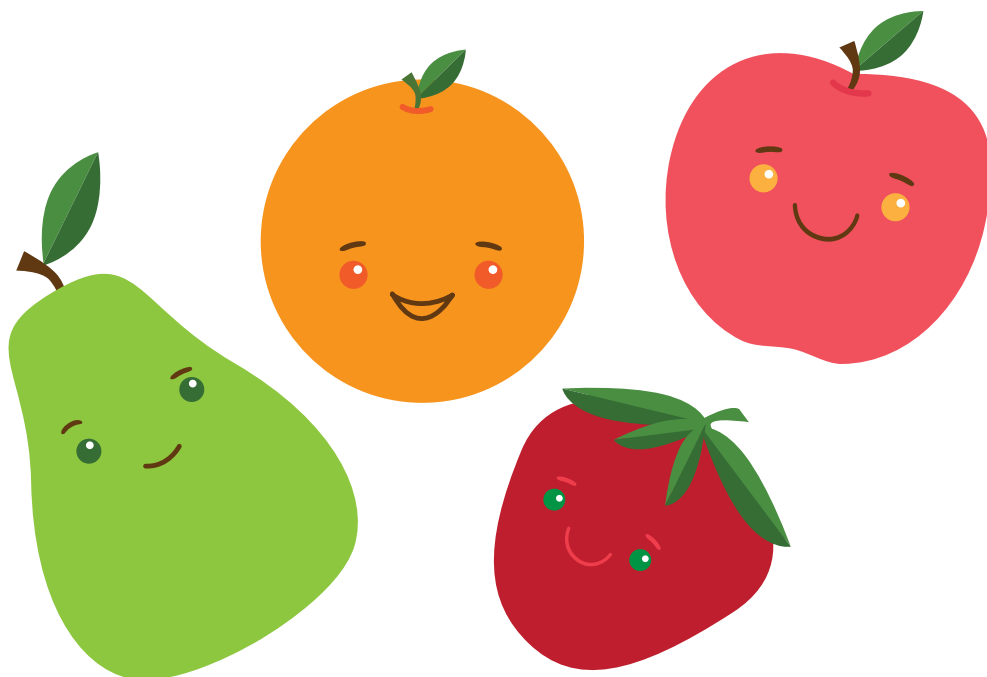
Other snack ideas that are good for teeth are:

- Chopped vegetables or a piece of fruit
- Rice-cakes and cheese
- A boiled egg
- Air-popped popcorn
- Small tub of natural yoghurt.

Small children have small stomachs, so they need to have small, regular meals offered. Try three small main meals and one or two small healthy snacks each day.

When 'mini meals' (snacks) are consumed, offer a varied selection of nutritional foods. For menu planning tools and resources visit the feedAustralia website www.feedaustralia.org.au. Parents/carers can also visit the Growing Good Habits website www.growinggoodhabits.health.qld.gov.au

or Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/nutrition-fitness/daily-food-guides/dietary-guide-2-3-years for more information and recipes.



Fact sheet 5: Sugary drinks

A recent Australian survey reported over 9% of adults and over 7% of children aged 2-17 years consume sugar sweetened drinks daily.⁶ Frequent sugar consumption is one of the main causes of tooth decay and increases the risk of childhood weight gain and obesity. Tooth decay is the result of a process where bacteria in the mouth feed on sugars and produce acids, which can dissolve tooth enamel. Each time a child drinks sugar-containing foods or drinks, acids attack the child's teeth for at least 20 minutes. If teeth are exposed to this 'acid attack' often, tooth decay will occur.

Allowing a young child to suck on sweetened liquids constantly throughout the day, or to fall asleep with a bottle during a nap or at night (with anything other than water), or to suck on a sweetened dummy, can seriously harm a young child's teeth.

The good news is tooth decay is preventable. Teaching children about foods and drinks that contain sugar and the impact on teeth is an important part of oral health promotion. Parents/carers should be advised of the steps that can be taken to reduce sugar consumption.

Drinks high in sugar are:

- Fruit juice
- Flavoured milk
- Soft drinks
- Sports drinks
- Cordial

Many commercial drinks such as soft drinks, fruit juices and sports drinks are also acidic and may cause erosion (wearing away) of teeth. Consumption of these drinks should be limited, such as for special occasions only.

What about artificial or sugarless sweeteners?

Not all sugar free products can be considered 'safe for teeth', because factors such as acidity must also be considered e.g. soft drinks, sports drinks and 'fruit drop' lollies, though artificially sweetened, can still cause tooth erosion due to their acidity.

The limited use of sugarless sweeteners can be supported where a sweet taste is necessary, such as in medicines.

What drinks are safe for teeth?

Water is the drink of choice for babies over 6 months of age, toddlers and children of all ages. Water is best because it's cheap, almost always readily available, contains zero sugar and kilojoules, and if children have access to water that contains fluoride, can strengthen teeth.



Fact sheet 6: Hidden sugars in foods and drinks

Sugar is often included in foods such as fruit straps, muesli bars, health bars, sauces, and drinks such as fruit juices. By choosing foods that are low in added sugar we can reduce our total sugar intake. It is important to know how to spot 'hidden' sugars in foods and drinks.

Spotting hidden sugars

Manufacturers are required to label the contents of foods with the ingredients listed in descending order of the amount present. Avoid those products which have sugar listed high in the order of ingredients.

Alternative names for sugar are sucrose, dextrose, corn syrup, malt extract, fructose, maltose and glucose. These are examples of 'hidden' sugars. Products labelled 'no added sugar' may already be high in sugar due to concentrated quantities of naturally occurring sugars such as fructose and glucose.

Sugar intake can be reduced by using the information on food labels as a guide to sugar content. Here are five tips to choosing healthier products.

Nutrient	Tips for choosing healthier products
Sugar	Look for less than 10g/100g
Total Fat	Healthier choices are 5-10g/100g
Saturated Fat	Choose food with the lowest saturated fat
Sodium (Salt)	Choose products with the lowest amount of sodium, less than 400mg/100g
Fibre	Choose products with over 3g/100g or choose the one with the highest amount
Remember, some of the healthiest foods may be unlabelled (e.g. fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts, lentils, beans, fresh meat and fish)	

(Source: Let's solve the mystery of food packaging - www.healthyactivekids.com.au)

Discretionary foods

Children 2 to 3 years old consume an average of 3.3 serves of discretionary food a day which contributes almost 1/3 (30%) to their total energy intake.⁷ Discretionary foods referred to as 'Sometimes foods' include cakes, biscuits, confectionary, chocolate, pastries, ice confections, butter, cream, potato chips, crisps and other fatty or salty snack foods, sugar sweetened soft drinks or cordials, sports and energy drinks.

Health bars, squeezy yoghurts, fruit straps and muesli bars have a high sugar content and will cling to teeth. To reduce the risk of tooth decay, it is recommended that these foods, if eaten at all, be limited to meal times and not be eaten every day. Dried fruits are also high in sugar and cling to teeth so are best avoided or limited to meal times.

Sugar in medicines

Children who are on long term medications can be at increased risk of tooth decay if consuming frequent doses of pharmaceuticals containing sugar. Some common medicines contain high amounts of sugar. Parents/carers should check with their pharmacist or doctor to see if there is a sugar free alternative. Short term use of high sugar medicines does little damage however, daily use over several weeks or months may cause dental problems. Sugar-free medicines are recommended where possible.²

Tips to protect teeth from sugar

- Read food labels and identify foods with “hidden” sugars. Swap these foods for lower sugar alternatives.
- Limit foods and drinks high in sugar to ‘sometimes’ or special occasions only.
- Allow a longer gap between eating and drinking occasions to allow more time for the mouth to recover from an acid attack.
- Keep children’s teeth clean and free of plaque. All children over 18 months of age should brush with an appropriate fluoride toothpaste.



Fact sheet 7: Fluoride

Fluoride plays an important role in protecting tooth enamel and making it more resistant to tooth decay. This is most effective when teeth are exposed to low concentrations of fluoride over a long period of time (e.g. daily drinking of fluoridated water) and using a fluoride toothpaste daily.

Fluoride is a naturally-occurring mineral and works by inhibiting the ability of bacteria to produce acids, strengthening the enamel and making teeth more resistant to decay.

Fluoride toothpaste

From 18 months of age, children should brush with an age-appropriate fluoride toothpaste:

- From 18 months to 5 years of age: use a low-fluoride toothpaste. This is sometimes called children's toothpaste and has half the fluoride concentration of regular strength toothpaste.
- 6 years and older: use a regular strength fluoride toothpaste. Look for a toothpaste that has at least 1000 parts per million fluoride concentration.

Safe toothpaste use

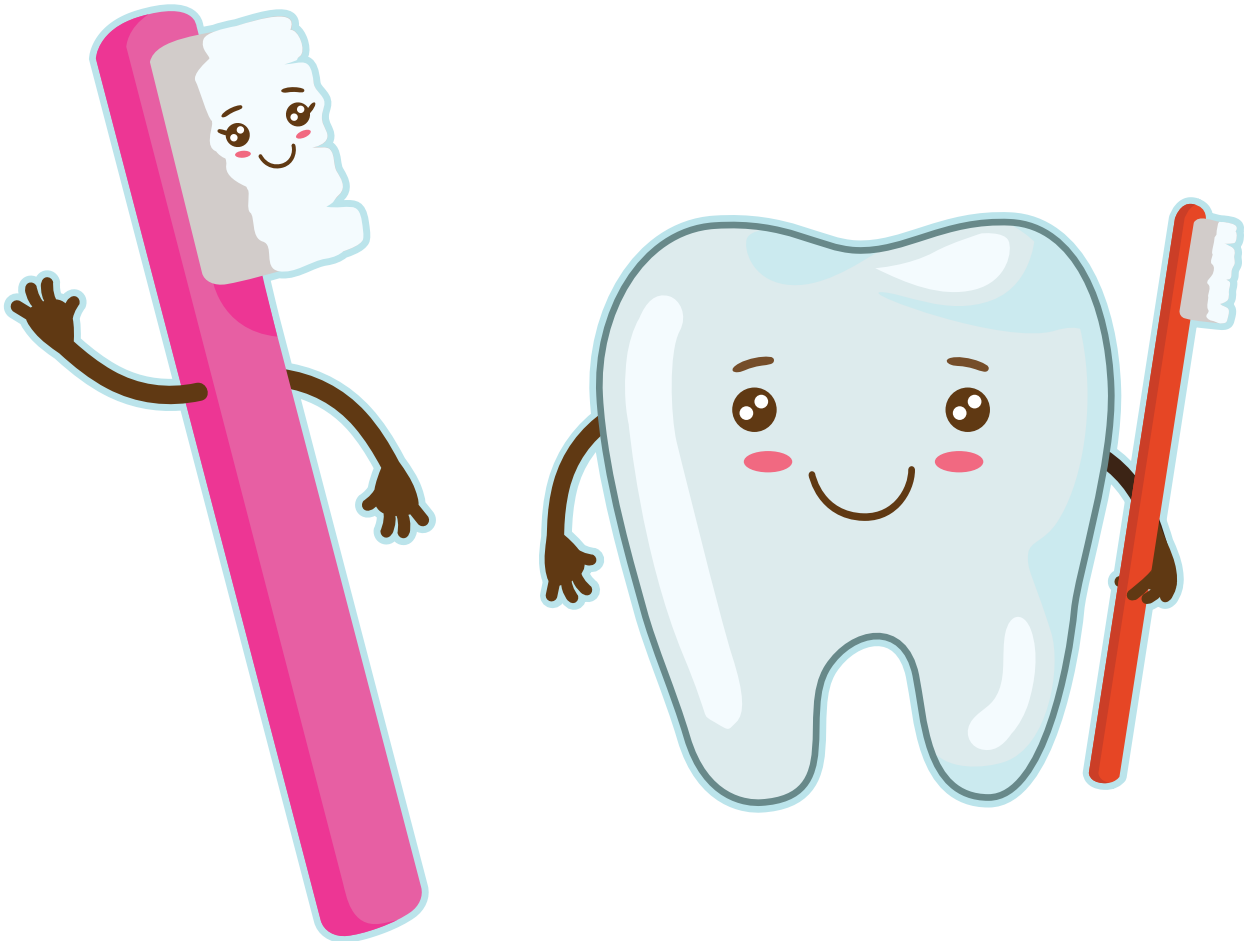
Children should be discouraged from using too much toothpaste. Young children do not have the ability to "spit out" toothpaste so may swallow small amounts of toothpaste while brushing. If children swallow large amounts of toothpaste this can cause gastrointestinal upset and increase the risk of developing dental fluorosis in their adult teeth (white or chalky looking teeth).

To prevent this, parent/carers can:

- supervise young children brushing their teeth or brush for them
- only use a pea-sized amount of low fluoride toothpaste for children 5 years of age and under (there are low fluoride toothpastes available which normally contain half the amount of fluoride of adult toothpaste)
- ask children to spit out excess toothpaste after brushing
- avoid toothpastes that are brightly coloured or contain attractive flavouring agents so that toddlers do not think toothpaste is for eating
- ensure young children do not eat or lick toothpaste
- keep toothpaste out of reach of children.

Fluoride use in children at high risk of decay

- Children with special needs, such as those with some medical conditions requiring long term oral medication containing sugar, have a higher risk of tooth decay.
- It is important for children at a high risk of decay to have good oral hygiene. Parents/ carers should discuss additional strategies to protect teeth from tooth decay with a dental practitioner.
- For further information visit: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/oral-health/good-oral-health/fluoride>



Fact sheet 8: Brushing children's teeth

Cleaning children's teeth thoroughly will prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Good habits should start early. Establishing a routine for brushing helps teach children the importance of brushing every tooth, every day. It will take about 2 minutes, to brush well.

Cleaning babies' teeth

Teeth should be cleaned as soon as they appear. It is necessary to clean the teeth daily, as plaque (a sticky invisible film of bacteria and left-over food) will form in a babies mouth just as it does in your own.

Use a children's toothbrush with soft bristles to gently clean teeth and the gum line. In young babies, a moistened soft cloth can also be used to wipe off plaque and milk around the teeth.

Cleaning toddlers' teeth

Have toddlers sit on a parent/carers lap to have their teeth cleaned. Advise parents/carers it is often easier to sit a toddler on their lap facing away from them, with their head resting against their body. This will help them to have more control and the child will feel more secure. Alternatively, a parent/carer could sit on a lounge or couch and have their child lie back, with their head in their lap to make it easier to see their teeth.

This can be useful to encourage fussy toddlers to lie still with distractions such as a favourite toy or TV show.

Toothbrushing technique

1. Setting up

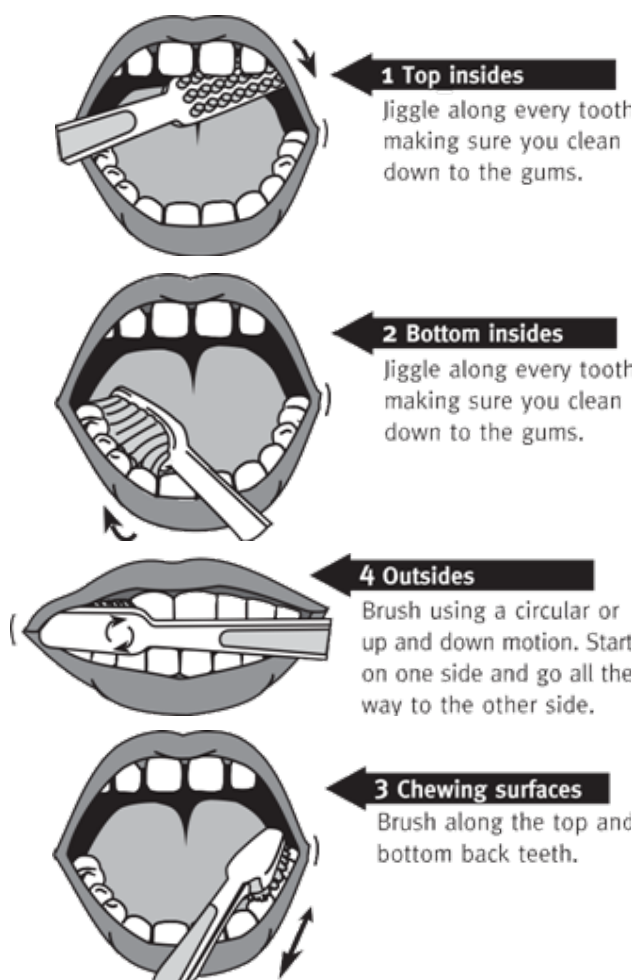
Dispense a small (pea-sized) amount of appropriate fluoride toothpaste on a soft, small headed toothbrush.

2. Brush all surfaces of teeth

3. Spit out

When toothbrushing is finished, toddlers should be encouraged to spit out.

Rinse the toothbrush and leave it somewhere clean to dry.



Fact sheet 9: Regular dental check-ups

Regular dental check-ups can start as soon as teeth appear. All toddlers should have their first dental check-up by their second birthday.

It is important for toddlers to feel comfortable, confident and relaxed in a dental environment. Educators are encouraged to use the resources of the Happy Teeth Program to demystify a dental check-up and to ensure that children are familiar with what they will encounter on a visit to a dental practitioner.

Dental disease in its early stages may produce no symptoms. By the time obvious cavities (holes) are present, the treatment required is generally more complex than if it had been treated in the early stages. Regular dental check-ups are important so that minor problems can be detected and treated at an early stage before they become serious.

Oral health services

In Queensland, eligible residents can visit their local Queensland Health oral health service at no cost.

Dental care may also be sought from a private dental practitioner. Private dental practitioners charge fees that may be reimbursed by private health cover.

All Queensland resident children eligible for Medicare who are 4 years of age or older who have not completed Year 10 or secondary school, or are eligible for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule are able to access public dental services. Children younger than 4 years or have completed Year 10 are also eligible for this service if they are dependents of current concession card holders or hold a current concession card themselves. Parents can also take their children to a private dentist of their choice at their own cost. For more information on accessing dental services for children visit www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth



Fact sheet 10: Dental accidents – what to do

When a child begins to walk, accidents involving the mouth are common. Injuries may vary from small chips (fractures) to the tooth being knocked out. The severity of the injury cannot be assessed until the area is cleaned.

First aid

If a dental accident occurs, comfort the child and let them settle. Gently clean the area to determine the severity and damage of the accident. Contact a dental practitioner and have the child's mouth checked immediately.

If a child's tooth is broken or chipped:

If a child's tooth is broken or chipped, seek urgent dental treatment.

If a child's baby tooth is knocked out:

Do not try and replace a baby tooth back into the mouth if it is completely knocked out. Seek urgent dental treatment. However, a permanent tooth should always be replaced in its socket, if possible.

Injury to the baby teeth can cause the nerve to die even if there is no obvious fracture. If the tooth discolours, or a 'gum boil' forms above the tooth, contact a dental practitioner.

If a child's permanent (adult) tooth is knocked out:

- Find the tooth
- Handle the tooth by the crown (top), not the root
- If the tooth is dirty, rinse in milk or child's saliva only - do not scrub the tooth or use water or other cleaning agents
- Immediately replace the tooth in its socket, if possible
- If not possible to replace, wrap tooth in plastic wrap or store in milk only. Do not store in water
- Seek urgent dental treatment.



Classroom Activities

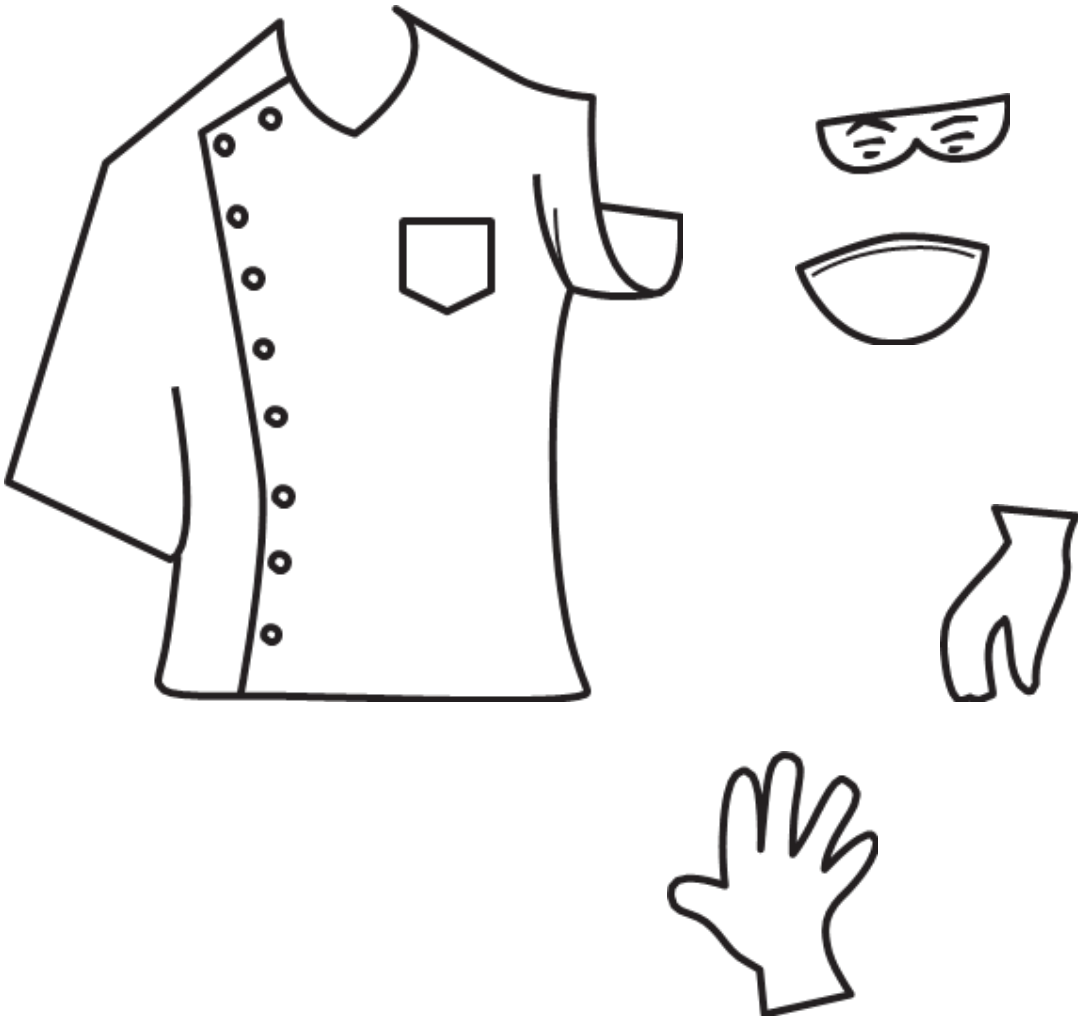


Classroom activities

Pattern for drawing your own dentist



Clothes for your dentist



Dentist coat pattern

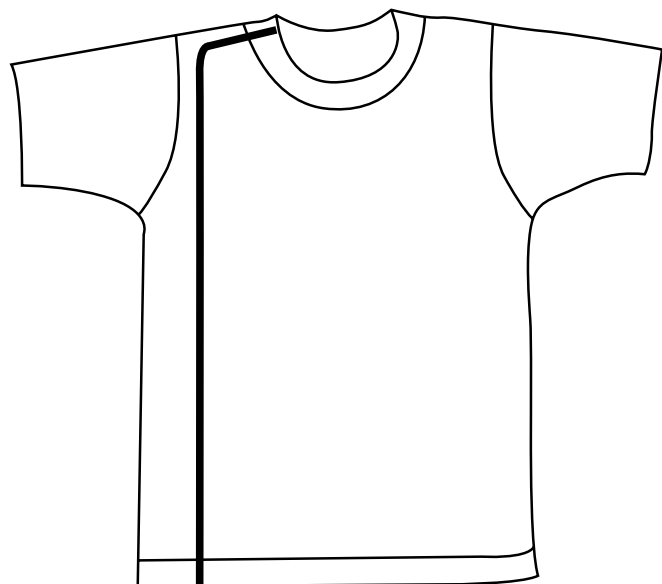
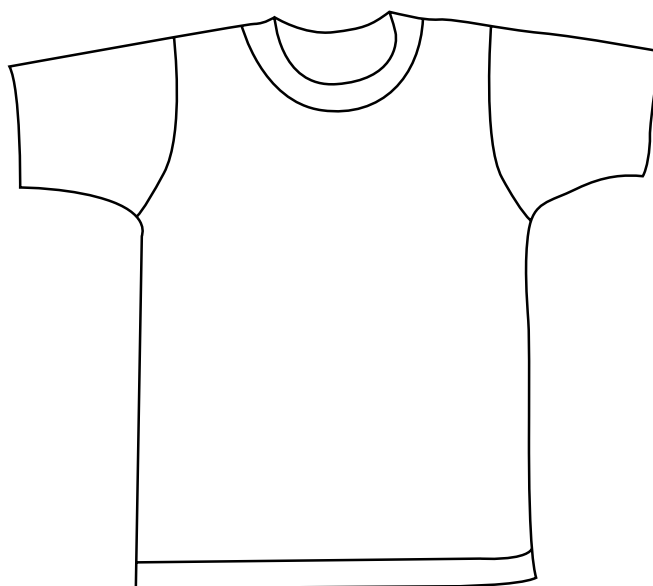
Step 1

Materials required:

Plain white T-shirt

Soft-touch snap fastener kit (large)

Dark grey cotton



Step 2

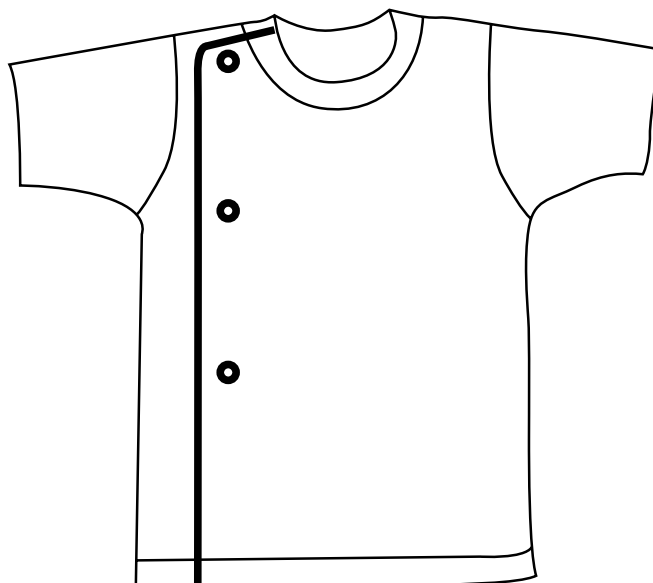
Draw in coat edge stitching line across the shoulder and down the side with pencil (it will wash out).

See diagram on left.

Step 3

Sew along line in grey cotton, using a long stitch length. Apply 3 to 4 studs as per package directions.

See diagram on right.



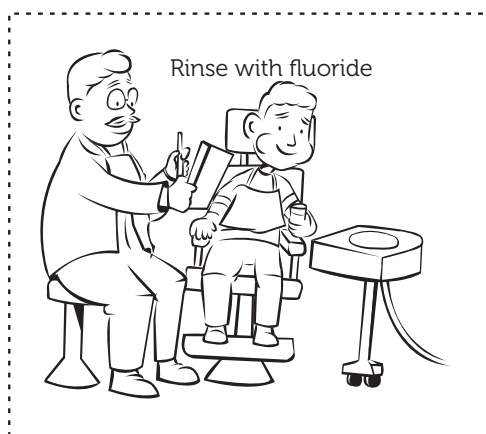
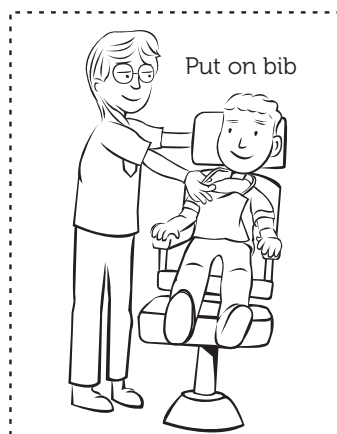
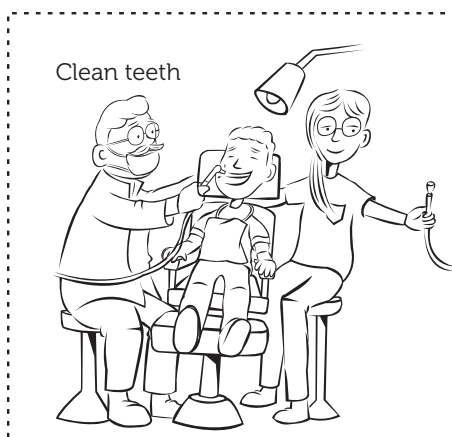
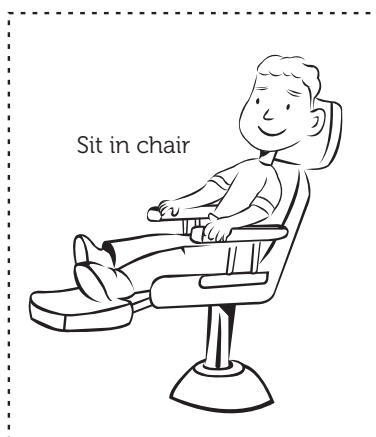
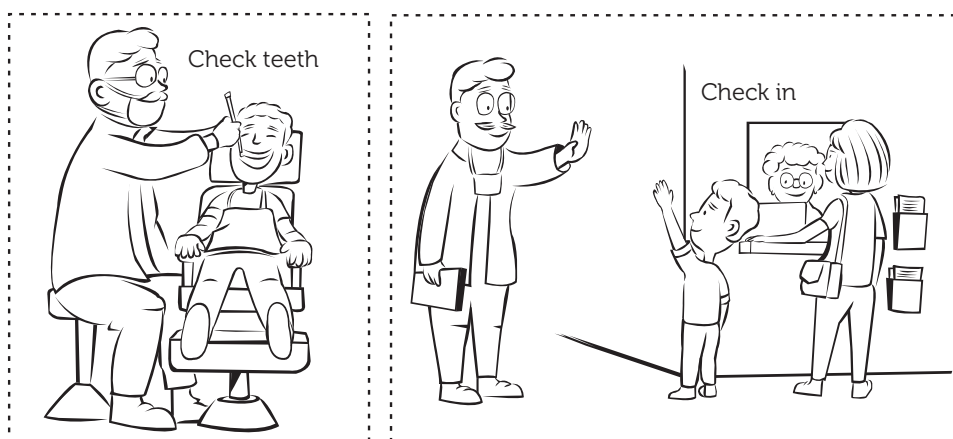
Dentist storyboard – activity for Educators (Tip: cut out and laminate)

DENTIST STORYBOARD

Dentists help everyone keep their teeth healthy and strong. It is important to brush your teeth at least two times a day and use floss.

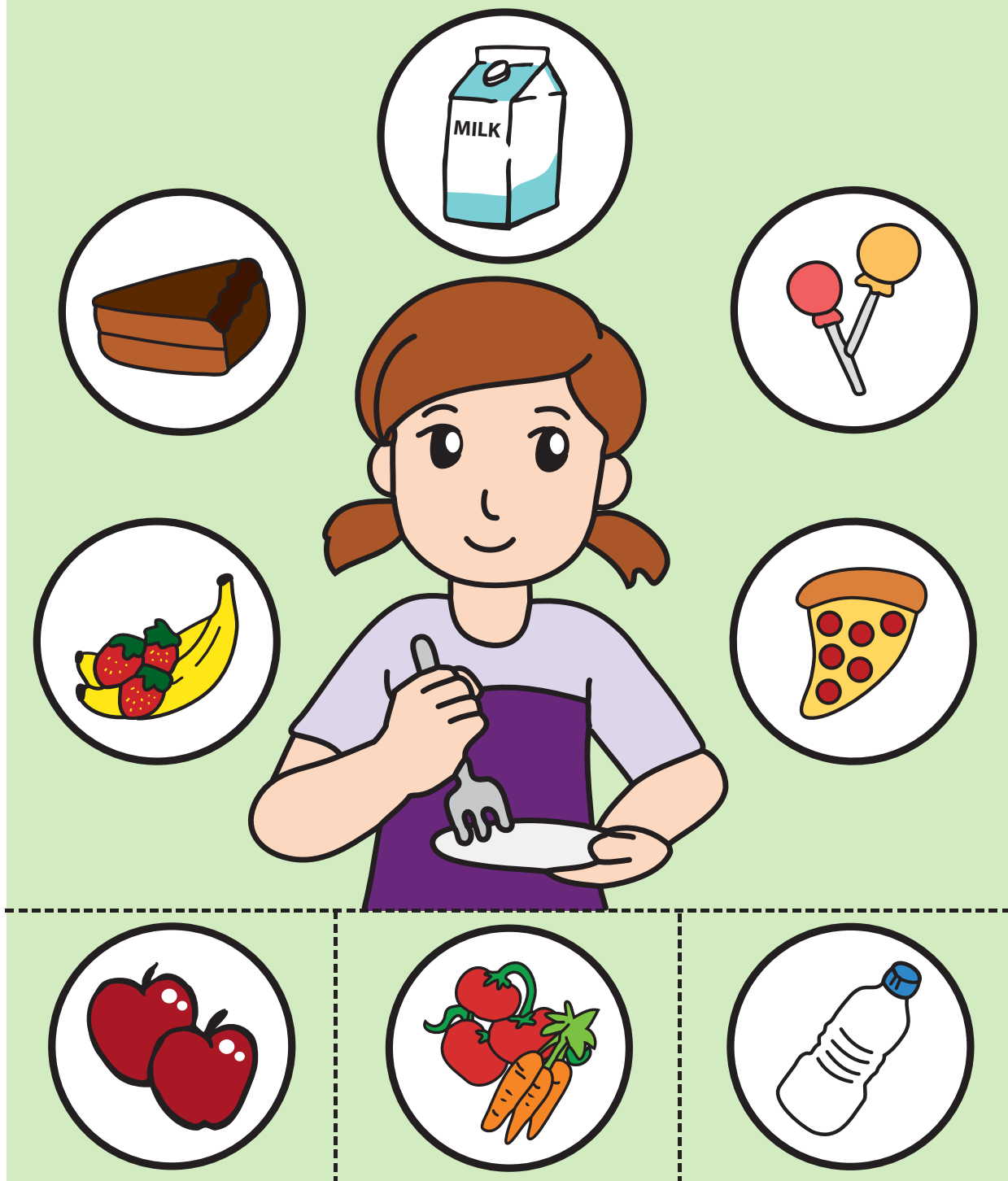
When was **your** last checkup? Test your memory by cutting out the drawings and placing them in the correct order.

Bonus Activity: Color in the drawings with your favorite colors.

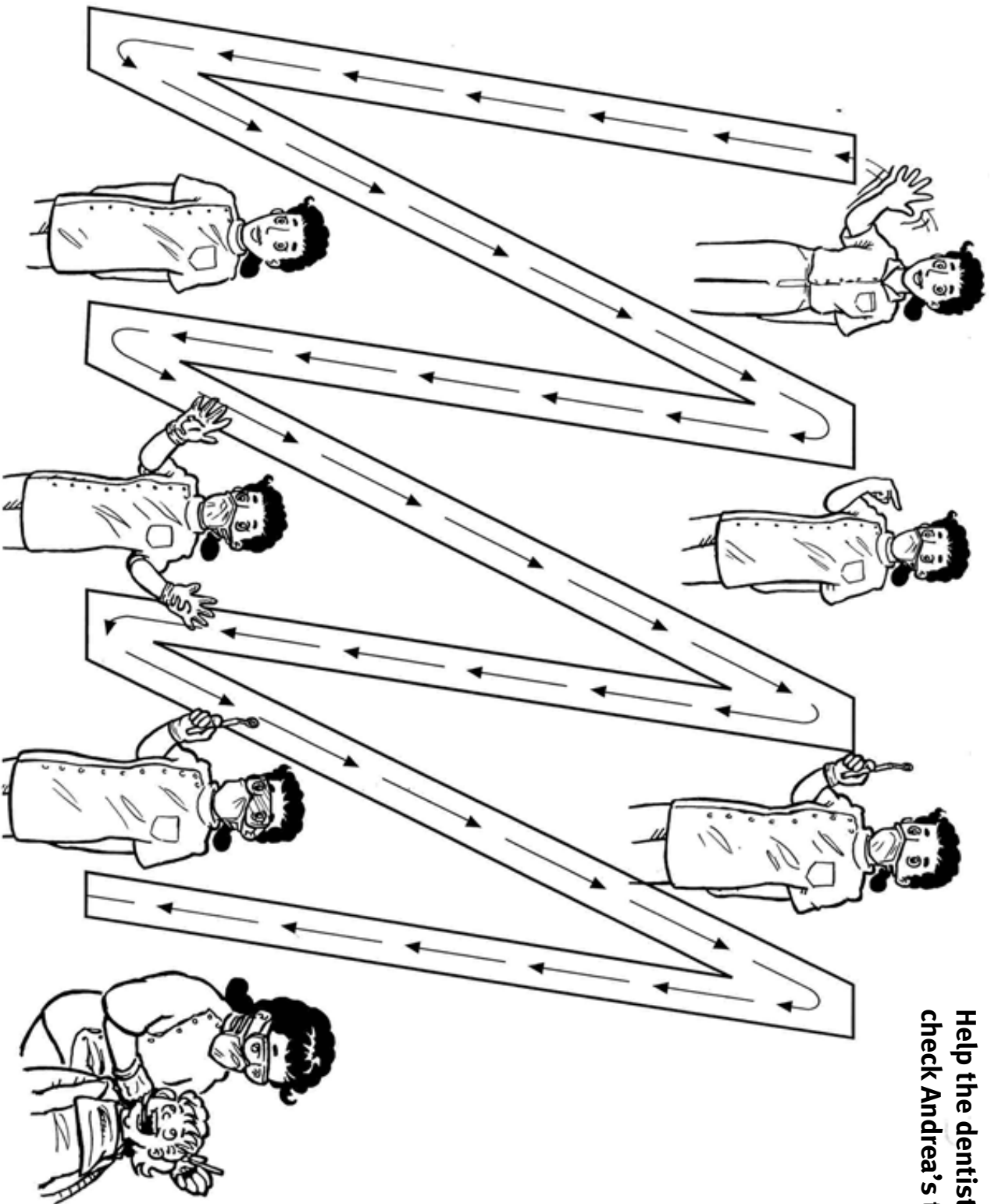


What Foods are Healthy?

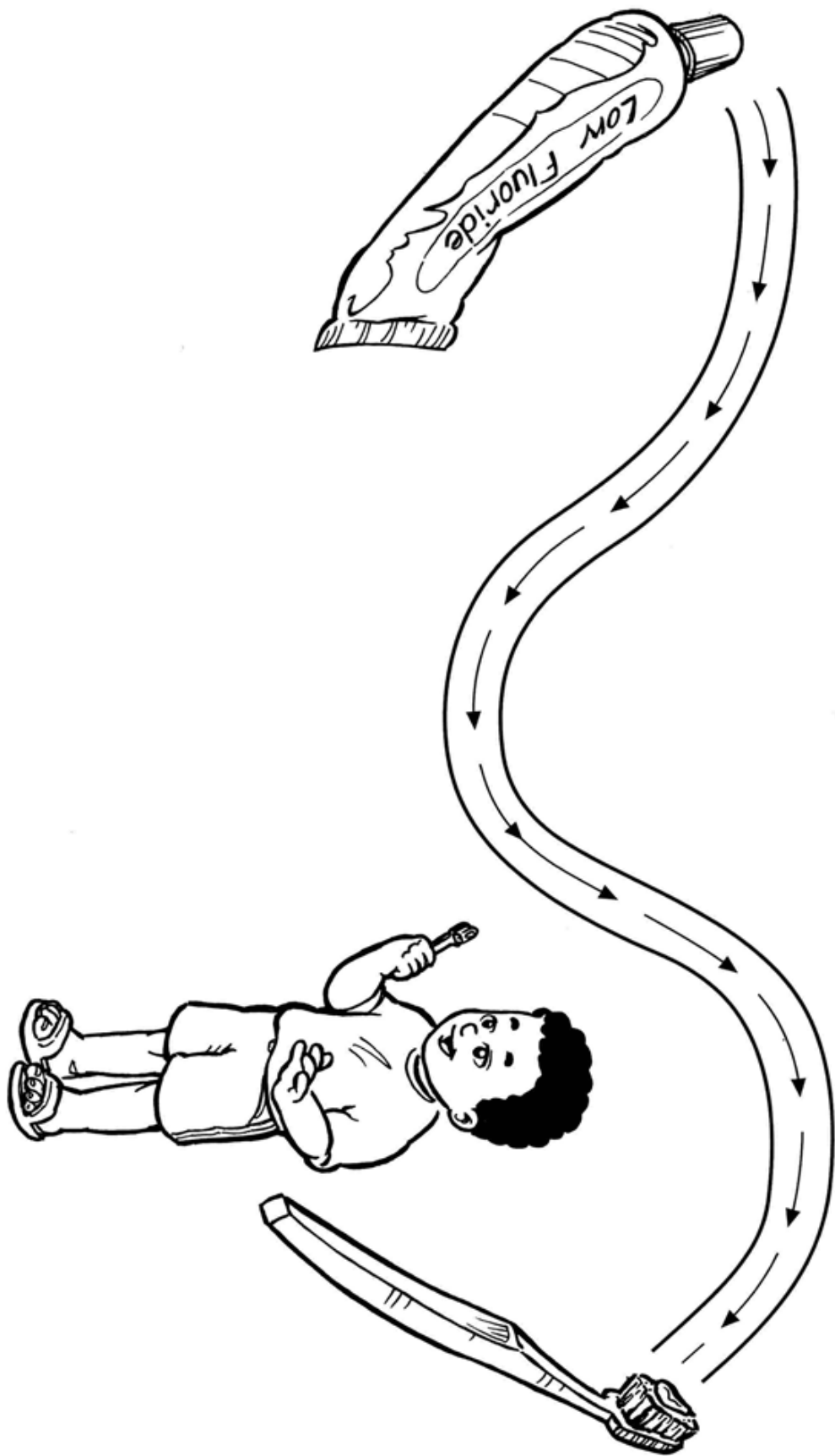
Cut out the items that are healthy.
Paste them over the items that do not belong!



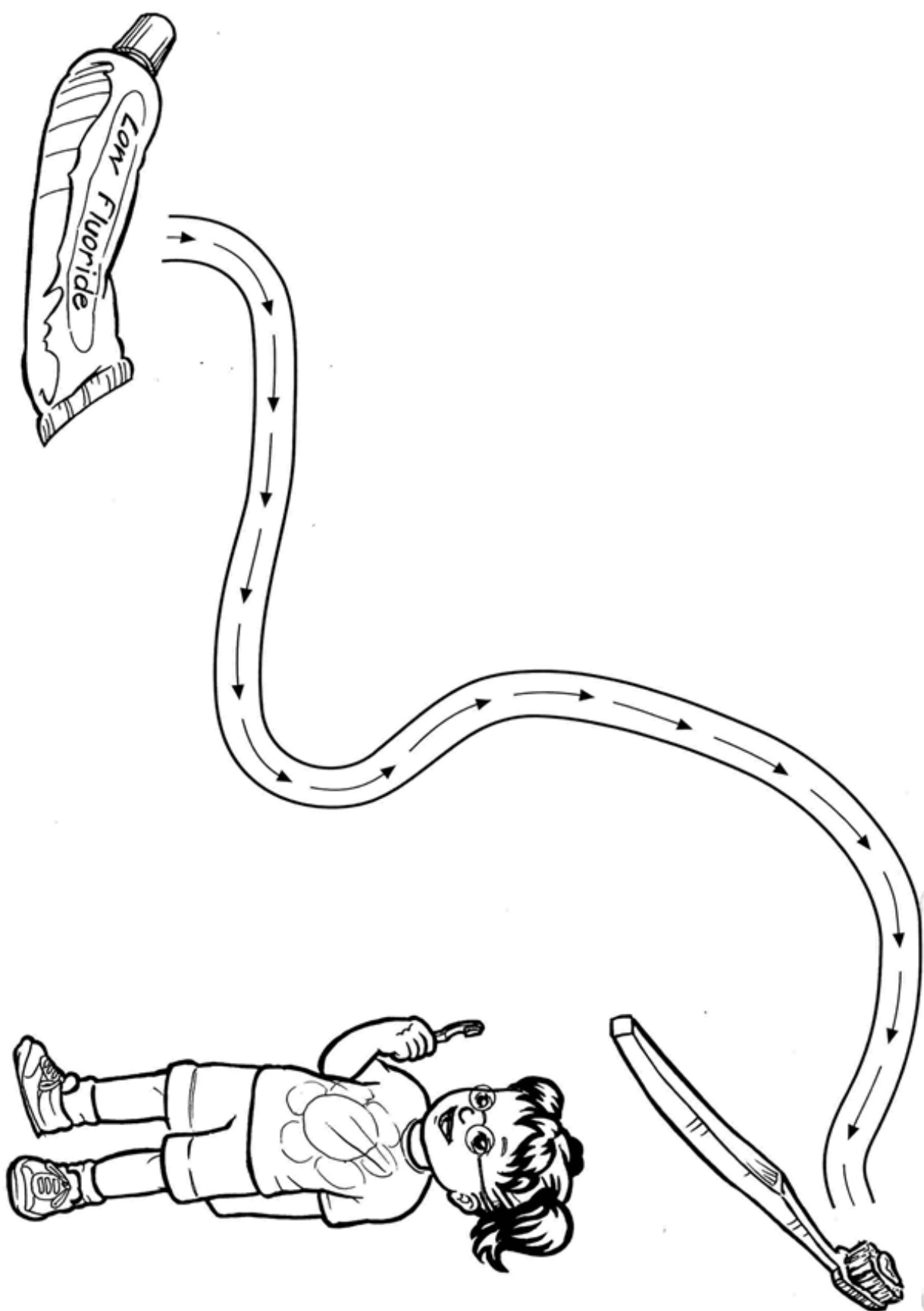
Help the dentist get ready to
check Andrea's teeth



Can you help James get the toothpaste to his toothbrush?

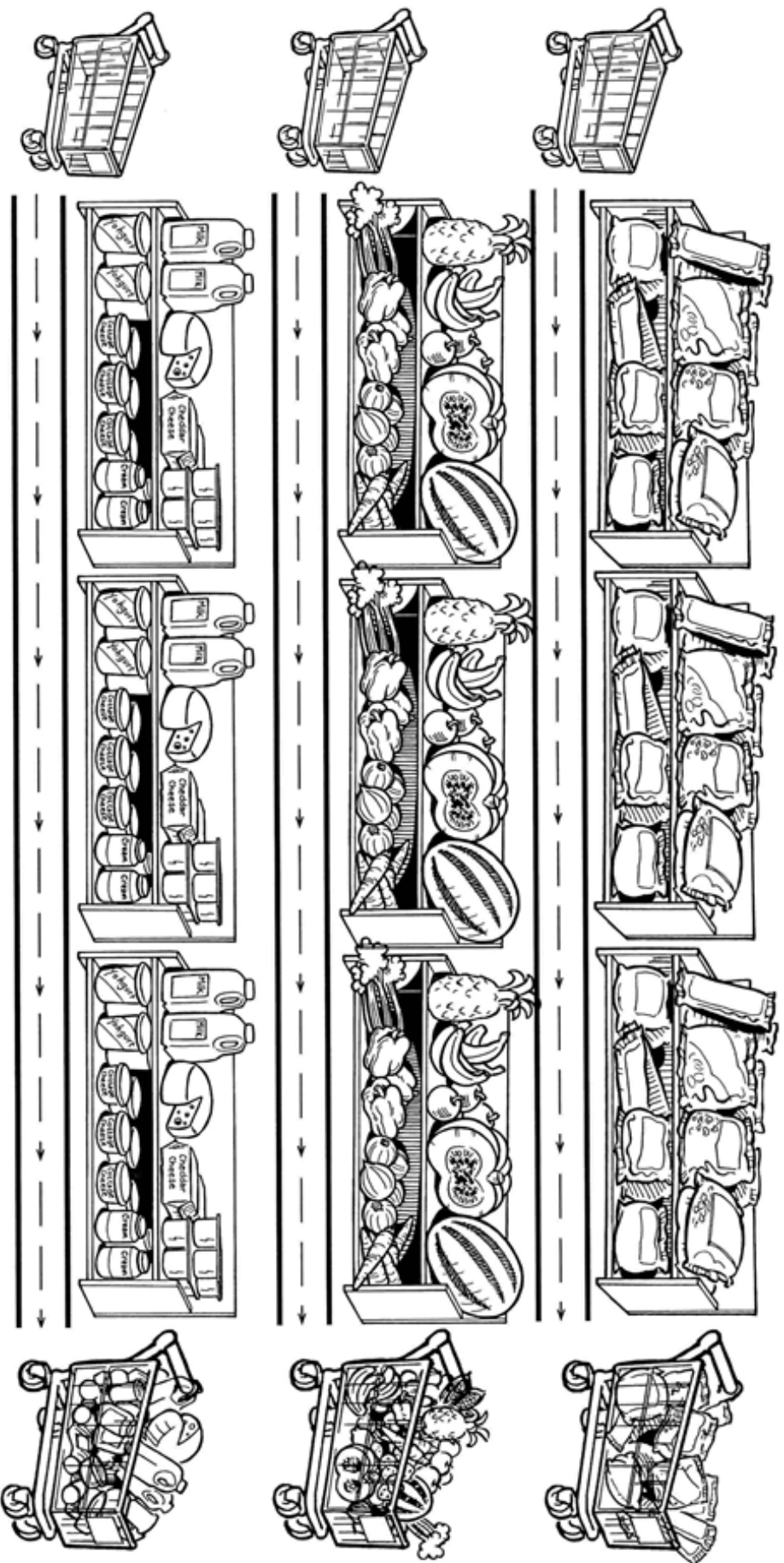


Can you help Jenny get the toothpaste to her toothbrush?



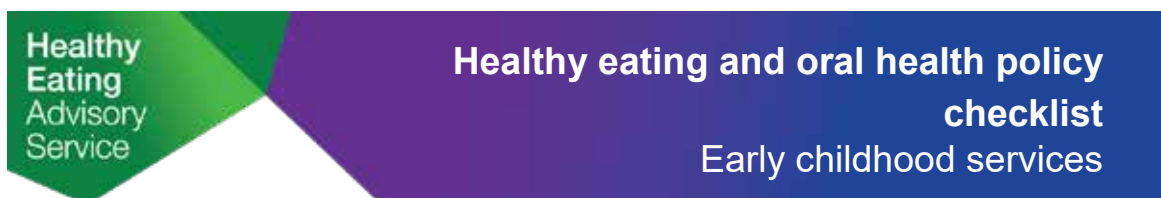
Shopping for 'everyday' foods

Follow the arrows to fill your trolley



Perhaps you can draw a picture of yourself helping to unpack the groceries at home

To access this and other nutrition and healthy eating information for early childhood please visit the Healthy Eating Advisory Service (<https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-services>) or the Munch and Move Program (<https://healthykids.nsw.gov.au/munch-move-resources/>).



This document broadly outlines what needs to be included in a policy to ensure a whole-service approach to health and wellbeing is embedded and all benchmarks for healthy eating and oral health are met.

A policy is important as it provides staff, carers, parents and families with clear and consistent information about your service's goals and practices.

Please use the checklist below to review the procedures/content of your healthy eating and oral health policy. The overall message of each of these statements should be included in your policy, although the exact wording is not required. Early childhood services are recommended to personalise this policy to ensure it reflects their needs and specific practices by adding more detail to show 'how' the required procedures/benchmarks are met. This checklist will ensure that your policy meets the requirements of the Smiles 4 Miles Award and the Achievement Program's benchmarks.

Healthy eating and oral health policy checklist

Dimension	Required procedures/benchmark content	✓
Leadership and commitment	This policy contains the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose • background • definitions ('Healthy eating', 'oral health', 'nutrition', 'discretionary/sometimes food and drinks') • procedures and responsibilities • relevant legislation and policies • related service policies • ratified date and planned review date 	
	This policy is shared with the whole service community with opportunities to provide feedback/input.	
	This policy is ratified by management and reviewed at least every 3 years.*	
Healthy physical environment	Water (preferably tap water) is accessible for drinking at all times.	
	If the service provides food: The menu meets the <i>Australian Dietary Guidelines</i> ¹ and the <i>Infant Feeding Guidelines</i> ² ; the menu is displayed for parents and carers and has been assessed using the Healthy Eating Advisory Service's FoodChecker tool .	
	Healthy food and drinks are promoted and discretionary /sometimes food and drinks are discouraged for snacks and lunches that are brought in from home by staff or families/children.	
	There is suitable space for breastfeeding and storing breastmilk.**	
	Best practices are followed in relation to bottle feeding and sipper cups as outlined in the Infant feeding guidelines . ^{2**}	



Dimension	Required procedures/benchmark content	✓
	Safe food handling practices are followed, including safe procedures for food storage, handling, preparation and disposal, and food safety training.	
Healthy culture	Diversity and culture are considered when implementing healthy eating and oral health practices and when planning menus.	
	Educators interact with children at meal times and role model healthy eating.	
	Food and drinks are not used as an incentive or reward.	
	Celebrations and events include healthy food options and discourage discretionary options.	
	Oral hygiene practices are promoted and undertaken at the service when appropriate.	
Child teaching and learning	Children are educated about healthy eating and oral health, including how to make healthy choices about food and drinks and the importance of brushing teeth.	
	Educators and staff are supported to access professional development and resources to enable them to deliver healthy eating and oral health education.	
Supported staff and educators	Educators are supported to consume healthy food and drinks and maintain good oral health practices at work.	
	Healthy eating and oral health information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.	
	When food is provided to staff and educators for meetings, celebrations and events, healthy food options are included and discretionary options are discouraged.	
Families and community partnerships	Healthy eating and oral health information is provided to families, such as information about accessing local dental services and how to create healthy and nutritious meals.	
	The service's menu**, recipes and healthy eating and oral health policy/s will be made available to families.	
	Partnerships are established with relevant organisations and health professionals to support healthy eating and oral health practices, where appropriate.	

* Services participating in the Smiles 4 Miles program are required to review their policy every 2 years.

** Include only if this is appropriate for your service.

Sample definitions

Healthy eating and oral health: For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Healthy Eating and Oral Health' health priority area focuses on supporting healthy eating, including nutrition, positive food habits and food literacy, and supporting oral health and hygiene practices.

Healthy eating: Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- fruit
- vegetables and legumes/beans
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain
- milk, yoghurt, cheese, and alternatives
- lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans.

Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.³

Nutrition: The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth and development.⁴

'Discretionary'/'Sometimes' foods and drinks: Discretionary/sometimes food and drinks are high in saturated fat, added sugar, and/or added salt. They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged.

Examples of discretionary foods and drinks include:

- chocolate, confectionery, jelly
- sweet biscuits, high fat/salt savoury biscuits, potato chips
- high sugar/high fat cakes and slices
- cream, ice cream
- deep fried foods (e.g. hot chips) and pastry based foods (pies, sausage rolls and pasties)
- most fast food and takeaway foods
- some processed meats (e.g. sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, strasbourg, devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers)
- soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, sports waters, sweetened waters, energy drinks, flavoured milk, flavoured mineral water, iced teas and energy drinks.⁵

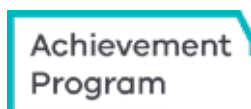
Oral health: A standard of health of the oral and related tissues that enables an individual to eat, speak and socialise without active disease, discomfort or embarrassment and that contributes to general wellbeing.⁶

Food literacy: Food literacy is “a collection of inter-related knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet (dietary) needs”.⁷

Relevant legislation and policy documents

- [Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:](#)
 - PART 4.2—CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY 97 Division 1—Health, safety and wellbeing of children — Regulations 77, 78, 79, 80
 - PART 4.7—LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT Division 2—Policies and procedures — Regulation 168 (2) (a) (i)
- [ACECQA National Quality Standard 2018 – Quality Area 2, Quality Area 6, Quality Area 7](#)
- [Get Up and Grow. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Australian Government, 2009](#)
- [Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, 2009](#)
- [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework For all Children from Birth to Eight Years. Department of Education and Training, 2016](#)
- [Australian Dietary Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013](#)¹
- [Infant Feeding Guidelines, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2012](#)²
- [Menu planning guidelines for long day care, Healthy Eating Advisory Service, Department of Health and Human Services, State Government of Victoria, 2012](#)
- [Menu planning checklist for family day care, Healthy Eating Advisory Service, Department of Health and Human Services, State Government of Victoria, 2013](#)
- [DET Safe Food Handling & NCAC Food Safety Information Sheet](#)

This checklist was created in collaboration with



¹ National Health and Medical Research Council, (2013), *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council. Available at: www.eatforhealth.gov.au.

² National Health and Medical Research Council (2012), *Infant Feeding Guidelines*. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council. Available at www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/infant-feeding-guidelines-information-health-workers#block-views-block-file-attachments-content-block-1

³ Nutrition Australia Victorian Division, www.nutritionaustralia.org

⁴ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nutrition>

⁵ Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Eating Advisory Service (2012) *Menu planning guidelines for long day care*, State Government of Victoria. Available at <http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-services/menu-planning/long-day-care/guidelines>

⁶ *Healthy Mouths Healthy Lives: Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2015-2024*. COAG Health Council 2015

<http://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Publications/Reports/ArtMID/514/ArticleID/81>

⁷ Vidgen HA, Gallegos, D, (2014). Defining Food Literacy and its components. *Appetite*, 76, 50-59. Retrieved from https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/apfnc/wp-content/uploads/sites/119/2015/06/Vidgen_2014_food-literacy-Appetite.pdf

Key messages - Eat well, Drink well, Clean well and Stay well

Drink well

- Healthy drinks are important for healthy teeth.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of tap water.
- Plain milk is better than flavoured milk.
- Eat fresh fruit instead of drinking fruit juice.
- Everyday drinks include water, plain milk and soy milk with calcium.

Fluoride

- Helps protect teeth against decay.
- Added to drinking water in some areas.
- To find out more on fluoride and water fluoridation:
<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/oral-health/good-oral-health/fluoride>

Limit sometimes drinks

- All fruit juices and fruit drinks
- Soft drinks (including diet varieties)
- Cordials
- Sports drinks
- Fizzy (carbonated) drinks
- Energy drinks
- Flavoured water and flavoured ice teas
- Flavoured milk and yoghurt drinks

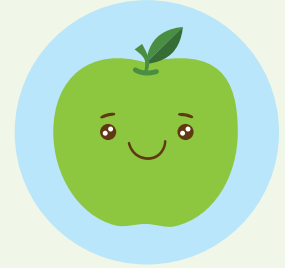
These drinks are high in sugar. Sugar causes tooth decay.



Eat well

Children need a variety of healthy meals and snacks.

- Limit package snacks such as biscuits and bars.
- **Instead base snacks and meals on everyday foods below:**
 - Fruit: fresh or frozen
 - Vegetables - raw, steamed and roasted
 - Grains, breads and cereals – wholegrain and high fibre
 - Cheese and yoghurt
 - Lean meat, chicken, fish, lentils, beans, tofu, eggs, nuts and seeds.



- Dairy products like cheese and plain milk can help prevent tooth decay.

Limit sometimes foods

- Muesli bars, fruit bars and snack bars made from breakfast cereals.
- Sweet biscuits, cakes, slices and donuts.
- Chocolates, lollies and lollypops.
- High sugar spreads – honey, choc-hazelnut and jam.
- Ice cream, dairy desserts and squeeze yoghurts.
- Dried fruits including fruit straps can leave a sticky coating which can harm teeth.
- Sweet foods can cause tooth decay. Foods and drinks high in sugar (particularly added sugar) should be limited, especially between meals.

Clean well

Baby teeth are very important. They help children to talk, eat and smile.

- Good oral health habits from an early age help to prevent problems as an adult.
- Everybody should brush their teeth twice a day- after breakfast and before bed.
- Help your child to brush their teeth until the age of 8- most children are not able to use a toothbrush properly before then.
- Even when children are able to brush themselves, they may need an adult to check they have brushed thoroughly.
- Children should have a dental check-up by the age of 2.

How to brush teeth

- How to brush - mirror sticker.
<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program>



How to care for children's teeth at home

- For information on oral health for babies, toddlers and children including toothbrushing techniques e.g. 'How to brush' mirror sticker in languages other than English and toothbrushing tips for children infographic, visit www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/healthy-teeth-for-life

Stay well

Ensure the family has good oral health

- Babies are born without bacteria (germs) in their mouth that can cause decay.
- Parents/carers need to help look after the oral health of the family to avoid spreading decay-causing bacteria to babies. Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and visit the dentist regularly.
- Make sure each family member has their own toothbrush and change every 3 to 4 months.

First dental check-up by second birthday

- Early identification of dental disease is important so problems can be treated before they become serious.
- Regular dental check-ups are important for children to feel comfortable, confident and relaxed in a dental environment.
- Did you know your child may be eligible for free oral health care? Find out more by visiting – www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth

Accessing dental care

- Free public dental clinics – for eligible patients.
- University dental clinics – suitability criteria may apply.
- Private dental clinics – fees for all services.

How to access public dental services

For information on how to access free public dental services including eligibility, the Medicare Child Dental Benefits Schedule, how to make an appointment and contact details for dental clinics, visit <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/oral-health/visiting-the-dentist>

Check for signs of tooth decay

- Tooth decay can start in baby teeth soon after they appear and progress quickly.
- Get into the habit of checking child's teeth regularly for early signs of tooth decay.
- Tooth decay looks like brown or white marks on the teeth that do not rub off. Check the gums for signs of swelling or infection (pus or a 'pimple' in the mouth).
- Make a dental appointment promptly if child has possible tooth decay or other problems with mouth.

The following are useful links to healthy recipes including tips for lunchboxes:

Healthy toddler foods and recipes

Raising Children Network

www.raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/nutrition-fitness/food-recipes

Healthy lunches

Raising Children Network

www.raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/nutrition-fitness/breakfast-lunches/healthy-lunches

Healthy lunch boxes

Healthy Eating Advisory Service

www.heas.health.vic.gov.au/schools/healthy-lunchboxes

10 tips to a healthy back to school lunchbox

Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service

<https://www.darlingdowns.health.qld.gov.au/about-us/our-stories/feature-articles/10-tips-to-a-healthy-back-to-school-lunchbox>

Healthy recipes

Healthier.Happier. Queensland Government

www.healthier.qld.gov.au/food/recipes

Eat for Health

www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/healthy-recipes

Posters

- Eat well, Drink well, Clean well and Stay well
- Dentist visit: colour-in
- Healthy eating
- Do you know the amount of sugar in common food items?
- Brush your teeth : colour -in

See page 96 for additional resources.



Setting up a toothbrushing program

A toothbrushing program is a great way to reinforce learning about oral hygiene in the early learning service. Children will learn the importance of brushing their teeth after eating, especially before going to bed. Also, for children who may not be brushing regularly at home, a toothbrushing program provides a strategy to ensure teeth are clean and have access to the protective benefits of fluoridated toothpaste.

Before starting the program, it is important to consider all policies and procedures that promote good oral health. Staff should be provided with training on how to run the program and advice provided to parents/carers on a regular basis regarding the need for home brushing including a copy of the Toothbrush Program letter (see resource section).

If you are planning to introduce a toothbrushing program at your early learning service, consider involving a dental practitioner to assist in setting up the program and demonstrating the correct toothbrushing technique to the children and staff.

Equipment required

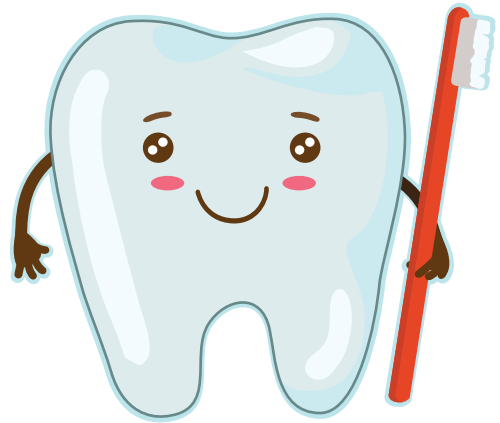
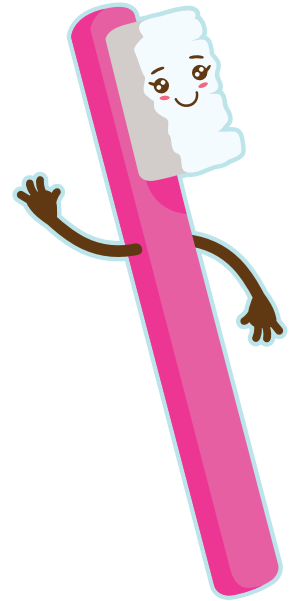
Each child will need:

- 1 x small soft toothbrush (Note: children need a new brush every 3-4 months)
- 1 x toothpaste (age-appropriate fluoride toothpaste)
- 2 x sealable cloth bags for storage of toothbrush and toothpaste or a toothbrush case to also hold a toothpaste tube (see toothbrush bag instructions and pattern)
- Individual cup for water – this will be used for rinsing the toothbrush after brushing.

Each child needs their own individual toothbrush and toothpaste to prevent the spread of illnesses that may be transferred through saliva. Ensure all items are clearly labelled with the child's name. Masking tape and a permanent marker are useful for both the toothbrush and toothpaste including cloth bag/case.

Cleaning equipment

- Soap - handwashing
- Detergent and gloves (cleaning sinks after cleaning toothbrushes)
- Paper towels (wiping sinks after cleaning)



Simple steps for a successful daily toothbrushing program!

This is a guide and can be modified to suit the early learning service.

Step 1 After lunch (or other meal just before toothbrushing), encourage children to have a drink of water.

Step 2 All children and staff need to wash hands with soap before toothbrushing.

Step 3 Staff dispense a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on the child's toothbrush, using their individual toothpaste. Only use a small amount of toothpaste and do not allow children to dispense their own toothpaste.

Step 4 Staff member(s) lead children in cleaning their teeth using the technique outlined in Fact sheet 8. Brush for 1-2 minutes.



Play 'The Toothbrush Song' from the CD to make the toothbrushing session more fun! Display a 'how to brush' mirror sticker near the toothbrushing sink to remind both children and staff of the correct brushing technique.

Step 5 When the children are finished brushing their teeth, instruct them to spit out the toothpaste into the sink.

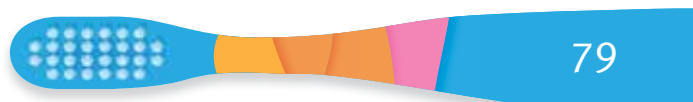
Step 6 Clean the toothbrushes and then place in child's bag or case with their toothpaste. To clean their toothbrush, children can:
a. rinse their toothbrush individually and shake off excess water, or
b. place their toothbrush in their cup for staff to clear and rinse (ensure cups are labelled if using this method).

Step 7 Bags must be stored in a dry area to allow them to dry thoroughly or cases must be stored with lids open for a couple of hours to allow brushes to dry (to prevent mould and bacterial growth).

Step 8 A solution of detergent and water should be used to wash down the sink where the toothbrushes have been rinsed. Gloves should be worn while doing this and wipe sink dry with paper towels.



The best time to brush teeth is after the lunch meal and before sleeping. This can be a busy time for staff and another time may be more convenient for the early learning service.



Hygiene and infection control procedures

Infectious disease can be transmitted via saliva and the following infection control recommendations will help prevent the spread of disease:

- Children and staff must wash hands before eating or brushing their teeth.
- Toothbrushing must be supervised by staff to ensure toothbrushes are not shared and handled correctly.
- Toothpaste tubes must not be shared as there is the potential for cross infection.
- Each child must have their own toothbrush, toothpaste and bag/case.
- Toothbrushes must be rinsed under tap water individually and gently shaken to remove excess water. Toothbrushes must not touch the sink.
- To prevent mould on toothbrushes, open the cases and let them dry thoroughly.

Cleaning routine

- **Toothbrush bags should be washed every six weeks:**
 - remove toothpaste and brush, and place in a clean bag
 - used bags are washed in a general washing cycle using laundry detergent and then dried in either a dryer or hung out to dry in sunlight.
- **Toothbrush cases should be cleaned every 4 weeks:**
 - remove toothpaste and brush, wrap in a paper towel
 - cases are washed with detergent and water (can be put through a dishwasher cycle)
 - cases are then cleaned with an anti-bacterial solution and left to dry.

Every effort has been made to ensure the above routine will provide a safe toothbrushing environment for children. If services cannot follow the required infection control procedures, they should not undertake a toothbrushing program.



Toothbrushes should be replaced every 3 to 4 months or if a toothbrush becomes shaggy, it should be replaced sooner. Do not allow children to chew their toothbrush as this causes shaggy bristles.

- Toothbrushes are more prone to mould growth if stored in plastic cases - ventilation of cases is essential.
- Consider storing toothbrushes in material pockets or plastic crates (which allow cases to stand upright).
- Use the Happy Teeth Program characters to explain the importance of brushing teeth to children.

How to make a toothbrush bag

Sewing instructions

The following is a guide to make bags for a toothbrushing program.

Materials required

- 1 x 14cm (115cm wide) of cotton drill for every bag
- 1 x 9cm strip of velcro per bag
- permanent marker

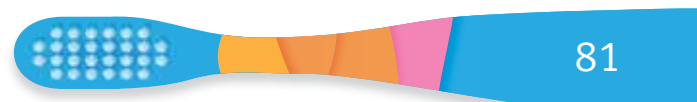
Step by step instructions

1. Cut a strip of cotton drill 84cm x 14cm.
2. Fold strip in half.
3. Sew along side seams - 1cm from long edges.
4. Turn inside out and fold end raw edges in 2cm. Stitch down to hold (Note: no raw edge seams should be visible).
5. Stitch a strip of velcro at either end. When folded in half the bag ends will secure.
6. Fold strip in half.
7. Stitch side seams.
8. Write the child's name on the bag using a permanent marker.



Consider using brightly coloured or cartoon themed material to make toothbrush bags eye catching.

*See next page for toothbrush bag pattern.



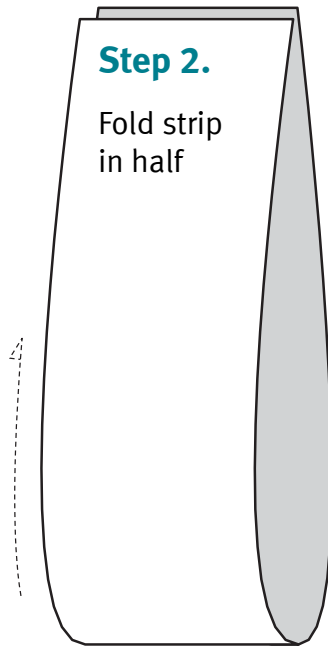
Toothbrush bag pattern

Step 1.

Cut a strip of
cotton drill
84cm x 14cm

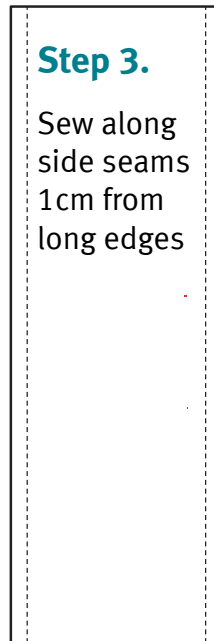
Step 2.

Fold strip
in half



Step 3.

Sew along
side seams
1cm from
long edges



Step 4.

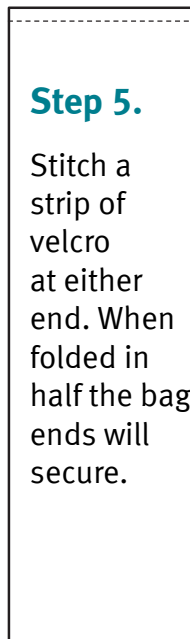
Turn inside out
and fold end raw
edges in 2cm.

Stitch down to
hold.

No raw edges
should be visible.

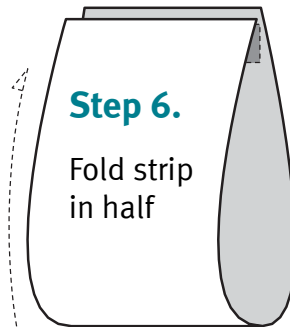
Step 5.

Stitch a
strip of
velcro
at either
end. When
folded in
half the bag
ends will
secure.



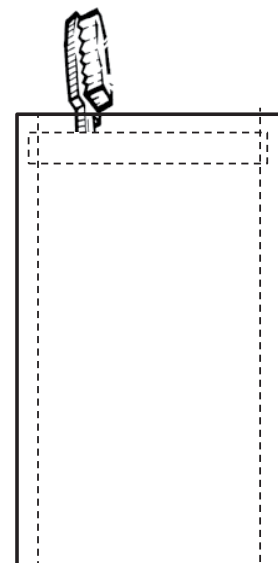
Step 6.

Fold strip
in half



Step 7.

Stitch
side
seams

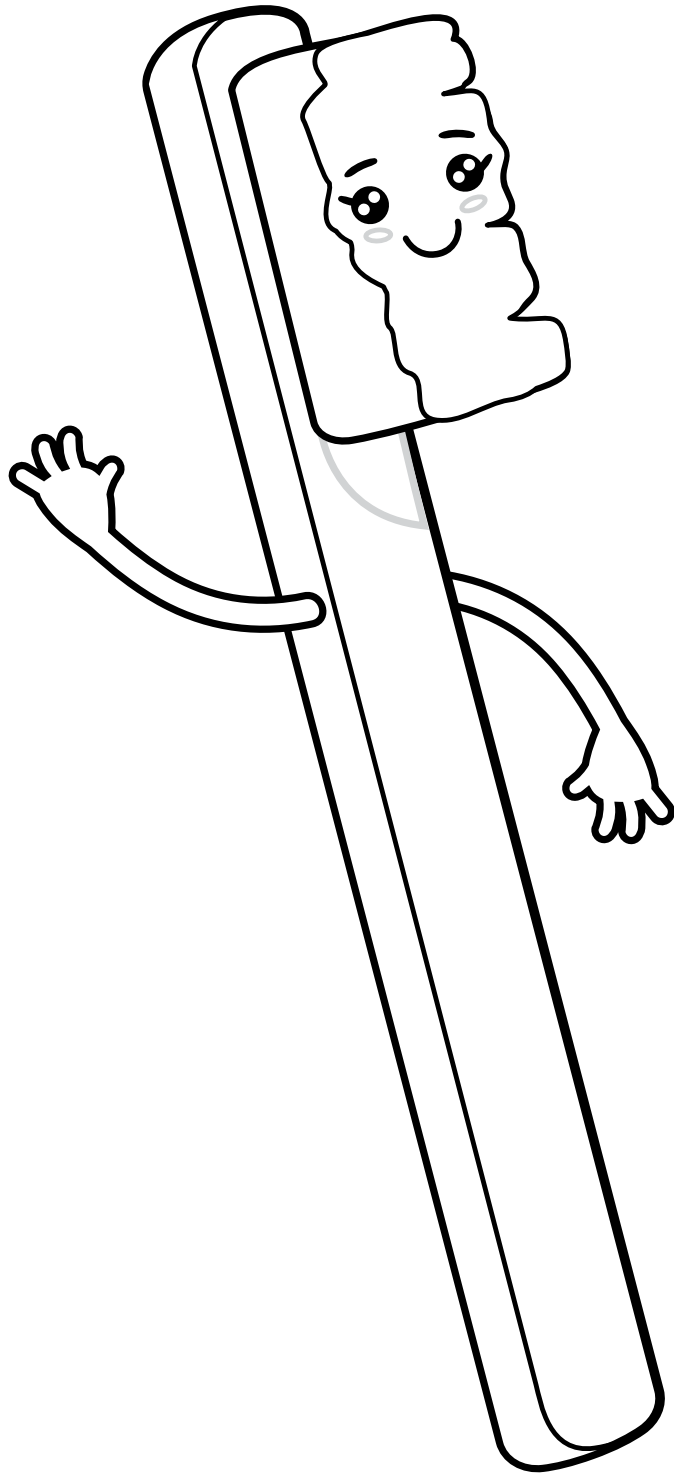


Finished bag is double thickness of material and approximately 20cm long and 12cm wide, with the velcro stitched inside open end.

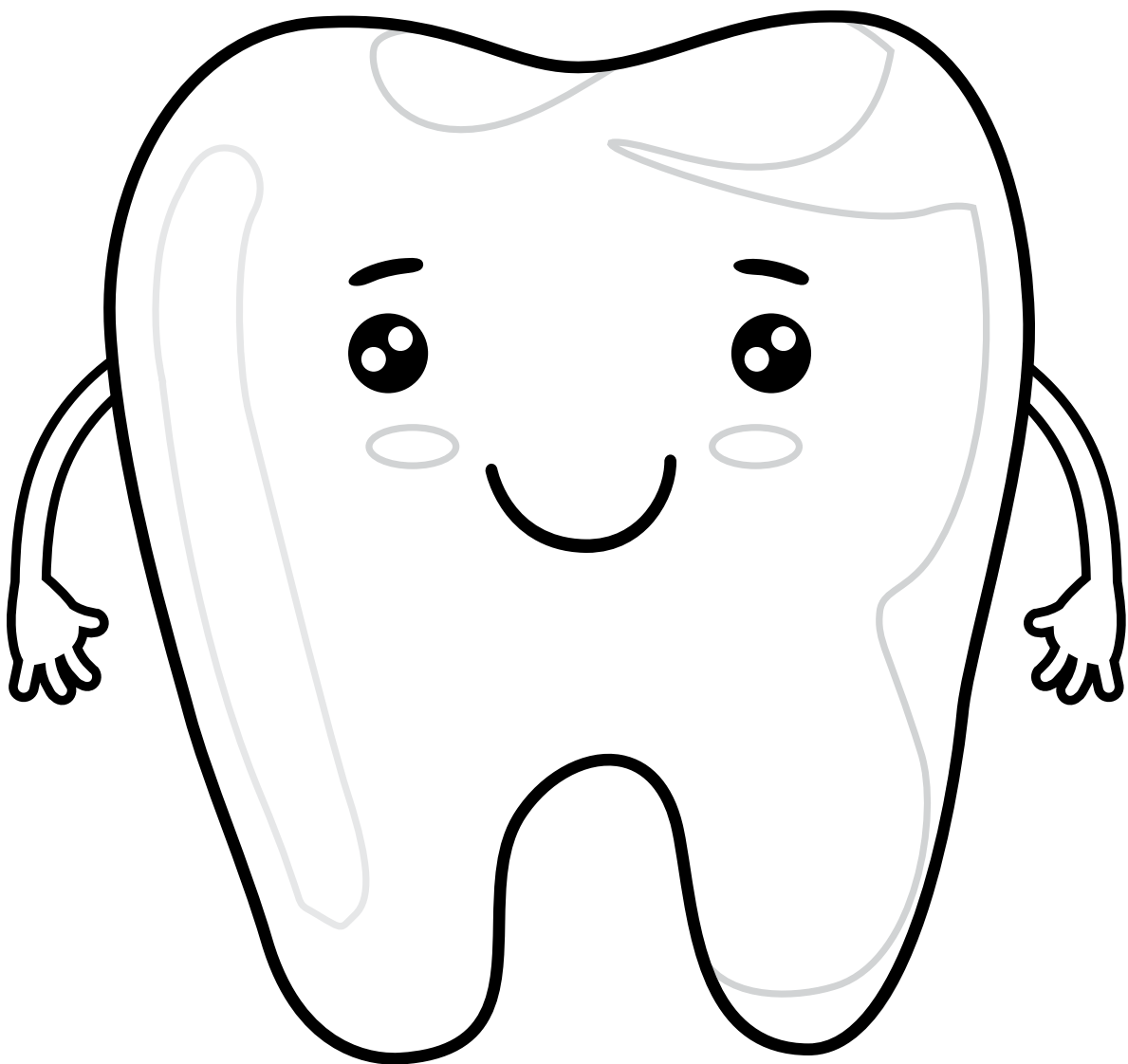


Write the child's name on the bag using a permanent marker.

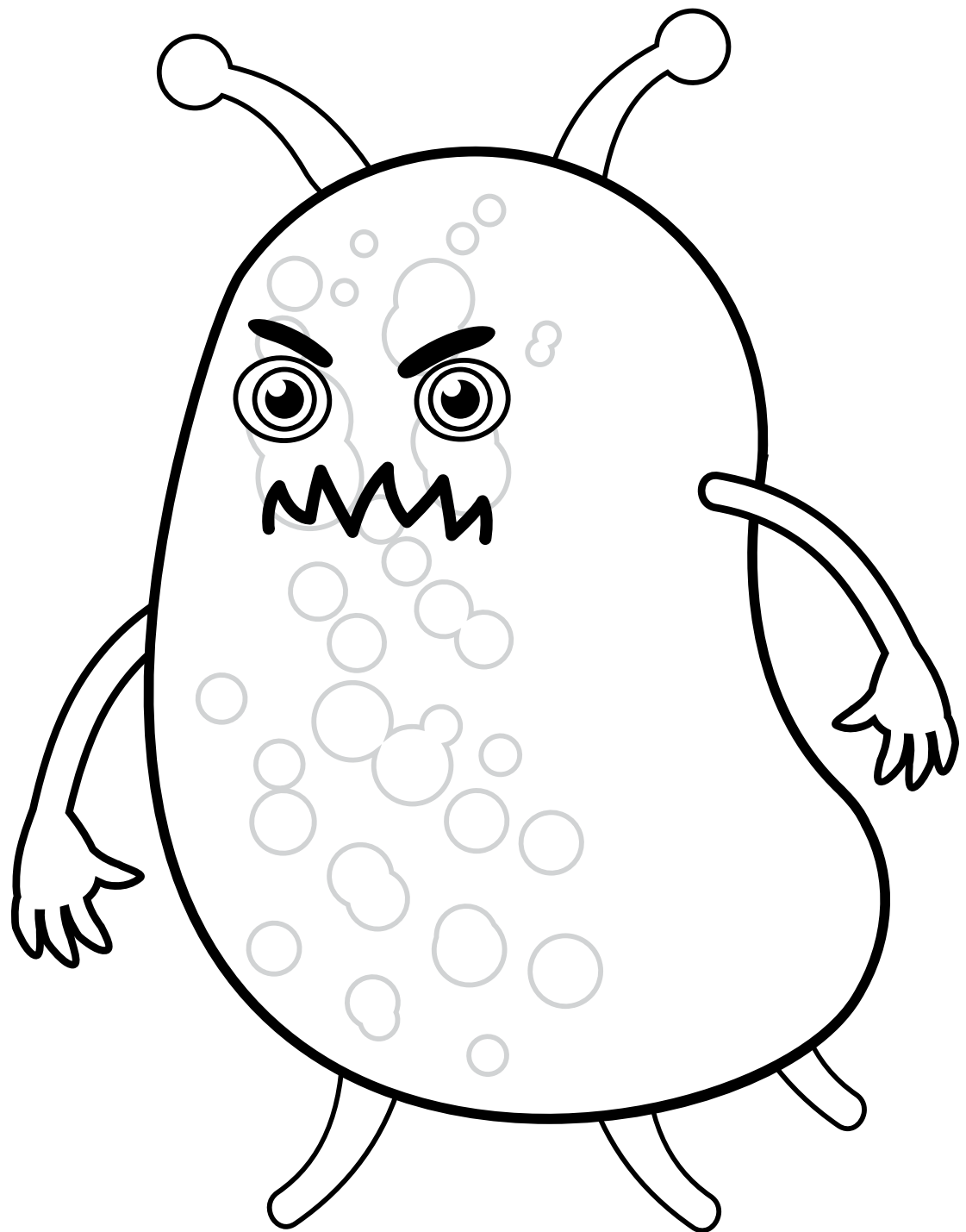
BETTY BRUSHWELL



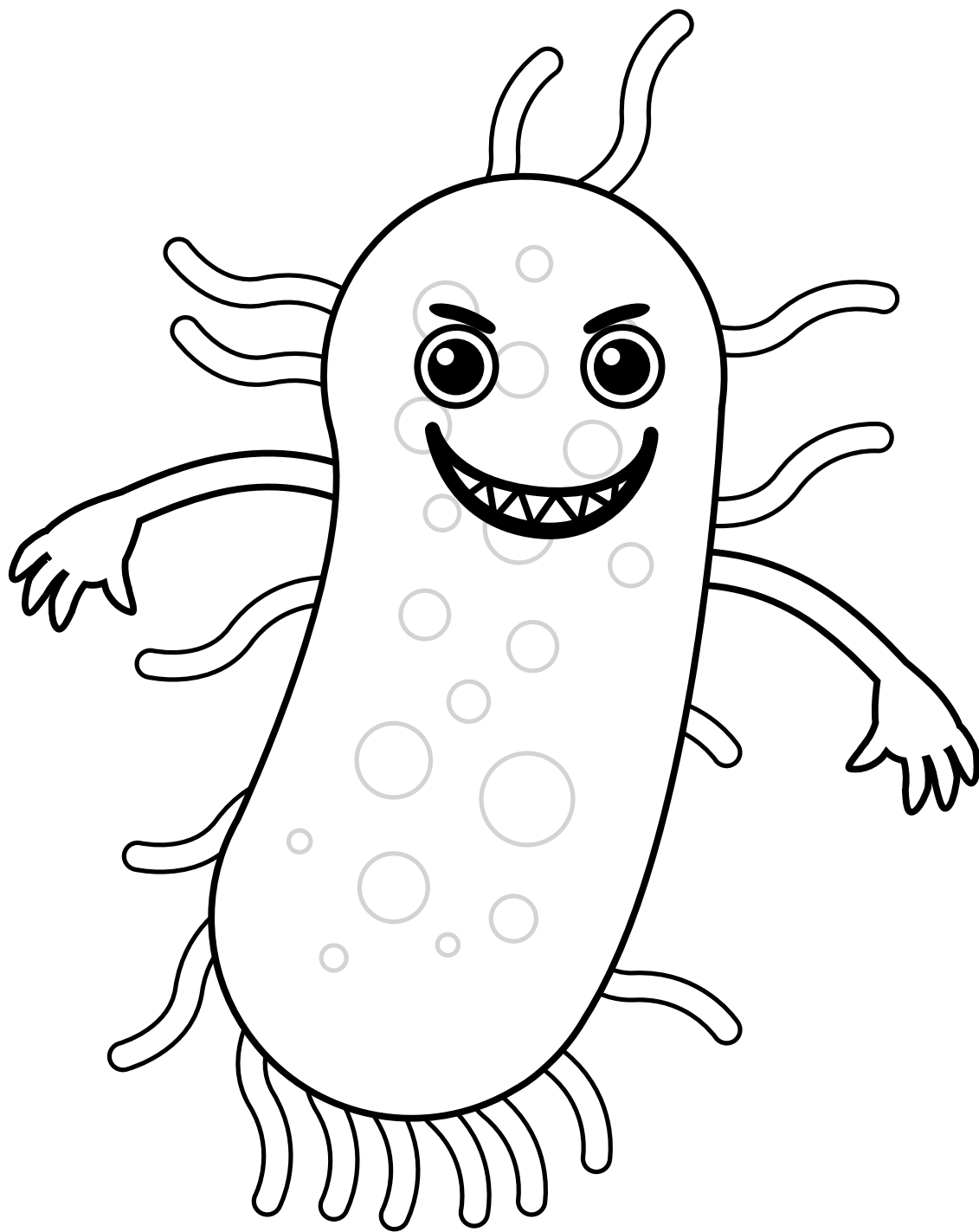
STEVIE STRONGTOOTH



BAZZA BACTERIA



GEORGIE GERM



Sausages

Five lean sausages sizzling in a pan,
Buzzle, fuzzle, sizzle and one went bang.
Four lean sausages sizzling in a pan,
Buzzle, fuzzle, sizzle and one went bang.
Three lean sausages...(and so on)

OR

Ten lean sausages sitting in a pan,
One went pop and another went bang.
Eight lean sausages sitting in a pan,
One went pop and another went bang.
Six lean sausages...(and so on)



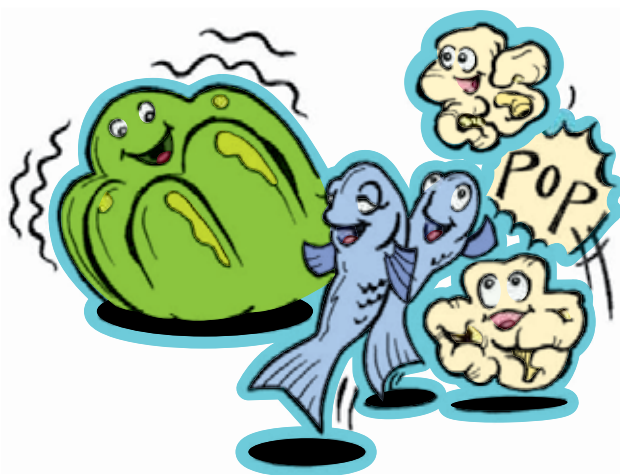
Wibble Wobble

(Say this rhyme to the same rhythm as Wibble Wobble)

Popcorn in a pot,
Popcorn in a pot.
Hot hop! Hot hop!
Popcorn in a pot.

Sardines in a tin,
Sardines in a tin,
Squash flat! Squash flat!
Sardines in a tin,

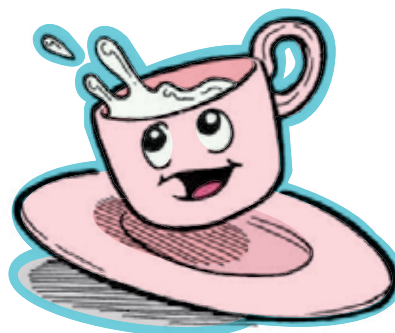
Jelly on a plate,
Jelly on a plate,
Wibble wobble!
Wibble wobble!
Jelly on a plate.



Cup and Saucer

(Actions: Hold left hand palm upwards and place right fist on left palm. Make pouring action with left hand into right fist. Raise right fist, to resemble drinking.)

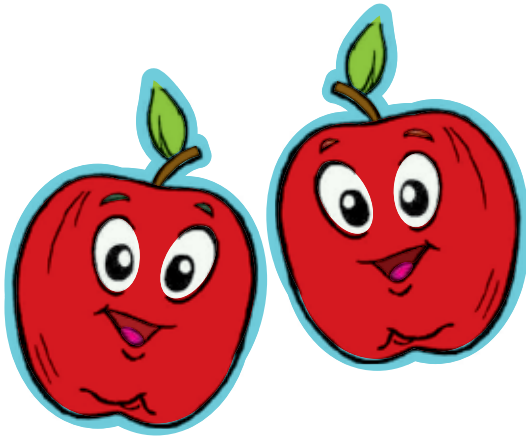
Here is a saucer,
Here is a cup,
Pour in the milk,
And drink it up.





Chop

Chop, chop, choppity chop,
Cut off the bottom,
And cut off the top.
What there is left
We will pop in the pot. Chop, chop,
choppity chop.



Two Little Apples

Two little apples hanging on a tree,
Two little apples smiling at me.
I shook that tree as hard as I could,
Down came the apples,
Mmmmm were they good.

Ten Rosy Apples

(To play as a group, use 10 children or each child may use their 10 fingers)

Ten rosy apples high in a tree,
Hidden away where no one can see.
When the wind blows, rocking to and fro,
The ten rosy apples to the ground will go.



Popcorn 1

(Tune of I'm a Little Teapot)

I'm a little popcorn in a pot,
Heat me up and watch me pop,
When I get all puffed up,
Then I'm done.
Popping corn is lots of fun.



Popcorn 2

I have a bag of popcorn that goes pop, pop, pop,
I bought my bag of popcorn at the shop, shop, shop.
With my bag of popcorn I shall hop, hop, hop.



Pease Porridge Hot

Pease porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold.
Pease porridge in the pot,
Nine days old.
Some like it hot,
Some like it cold,
Some like it in the pot,
Nine days old.



To Market, To Market

To market, to market, on Saturday morn,
For prunes and potatoes and ears of sweet corn,
For rice and pasta, for apple and pear,
To market, to market, our cupboard is bare.



Five Red Apples

(Child's name to change at each verse - can be used as a dismissal rhyme)

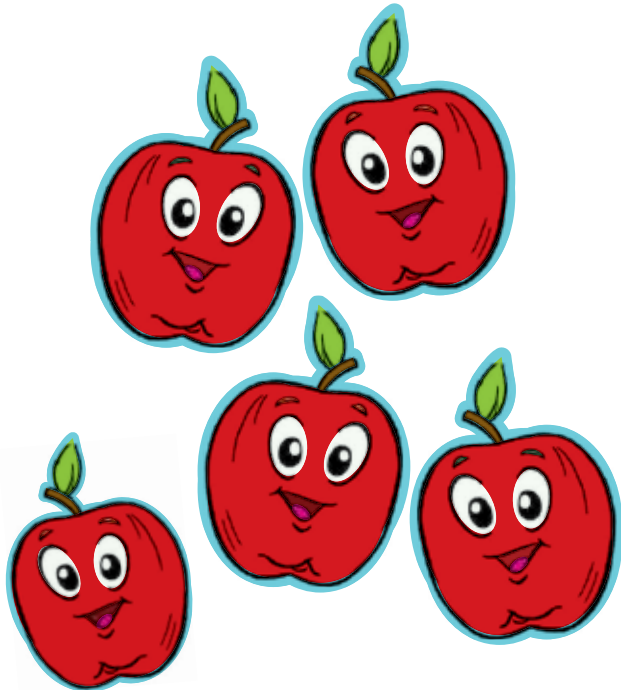
Five red apples in a grocery store,
(Name) bought one and then there were four.

Four red apples on the apple tree,
(Name) ate one and then there were three.

Three red apples, what did (Name) do?
Why she/he ate one then there were two.

Two red apples ripening in the sun,
One red apple and now we are done,

I ate the last one and now there are none.



Shelling Peas

I like to shell peas that are fresh from a shop.
I start at the tail end instead of at the top.
So they will explode with a wonderful pop!

The Pea Pod

(Actions - Place both hands together palm to palm. At line three, start to open them as wide as possible, till "plump and healthy" then clap for "pea pod popped")

Ten little peas in a pea pod pressed.
One grew, two grew, so did all the rest.
They grew and grew and grew and grew,
And grew and never stopped.
Till they grew so strong and healthy,
That the pea pod popped.





Brush the Food Out

(Tune Shake My Sillies Out)

I'm going to brush, brush, brush the food out,
Brush, brush, brush the food out.
Brush, brush, brush the food out.
Show my nice clean smile.



The Toothbrush Song

When you wake up in the morning at a quarter to one
And you can't go back to sleep and you want to have some fun,
You brush your teeth. Ch ch ch ch, ch ch ch ch ch.

When you wake up in the morning (see below)
And you can't go back to sleep (see below)
You brush your teeth.
Ch ch ch ch, ch ch ch ch ch.

... at a quarter to two,
... so what do you do?

... at a quarter to three,
... and you want a cup of tea,

... at a quarter to four,
... because you've fallen on the floor,

... at a quarter to five,
... and you feel like a jive,

... at a quarter to six,
... and you want to do some tricks,

... at a quarter to seven,
... but it's getting light, thank heaven.

When you wake up in the morning at a quarter to eight,
And you're feeling very sleepy, but you're going to be late,
You brush your teeth!





Dismissal Rhyme

Suzie cleans her teeth, she cleans them twice a day.
She claps her hands and pats her head,
As she goes out to play.

We are all Stretching

(Tune We are All Clapping)

We are all stretching, stretch, stretch, stretching,
(use arms to stretch out showing freshly awoken)
We are all stretching, this fine day.

We are all washing, wash, wash, washing,
(wash face with hands)
We are all washing, this fine day.

We are all eating, eat, eat, eating,
(right hand scooping out from left hand and taking it up to the mouth)
We are all eating, this fine day.

We are all brushing, brush, brush, brushing,
(use pointer finger in a toothbrushing action on front of mouth or teeth)
We are all brushing, this fine day.

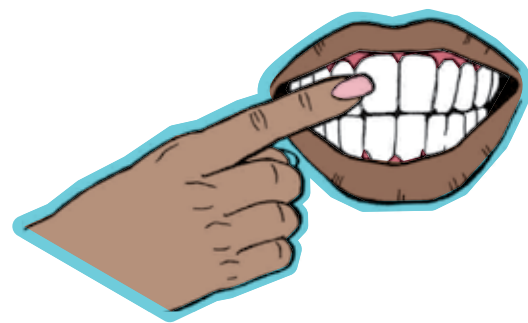
We are all ready, waiting and ready,
(sitting with hands in lap, and legs crossed)
We are all ready, this fine day.



Here's a Tooth in Your Mouth

(Tune Here's a House with a Wall)

Here's a tooth in your mouth, in your mouth, in your mouth,
(point to teeth)
Here's a brush for your teeth, for your teeth, for your teeth,
(hold pointer finger horizontally to mouth)
We can brush, brush, brush after lunch, lunch, lunch,
(move pointer finger up and down in front of mouth)
Our teeth are shining bright, shining bright, our teeth are shining bright.
(Show a wide open smile)





Here are the Dentist's Glasses

Here are the dentist's glasses,
(circle finger around eyes)
Here is the dentist's gown,
(smooth hands down body)
Here are the dentist's mask and gloves,
(show action of putting mask and gloves on)
Now we can all sit down.
(everyone sits down)

I am in the dentist chair, ready to be checked,
(put legs out in front as if in a sitting position on a dental chair)
The dentist puts my glasses on,
(put fingers around eyes)
And a bib around my neck.
(show action of putting a bib around the neck)



Round in Circles

(Tune Frere Jacques)

Round in circles, round in circles,
Scrub, scrub, scrub, scrub, scrub, scrub,
Jiggle them on the inside, jiggle them on the inside,
Teeth are clean, teeth are clean.



Song of Clean Teeth

(Tune Sing a Song of Sixpence)

*Sing a song of clean teeth, at morning and at night,
Twenty healthy little teeth, strong and shining white.
I brush them, to keep them, nice and clean each day,
And eat healthy foods to keep away decay.*

White Teeth

(Tune Sing a Song of Sixpence)

Sing a song of clean teeth, at morning and at night,
Twenty healthy little teeth, strong and shining white.
I brush them, to keep them, nice and clean each day,
And eat healthy foods to keep away decay.

That will keep them from decay.
White teeth, white teeth, see them gleam.
When we keep them nice and clean.





Dear Liza Tooth Song

(©Dental Health Services Victoria 2003 Tune Dear Liza Dear Liza)

There are teeth in my mouth dear Henry, dear Henry.
There are teeth in my mouth dear Henry, good teeth.

With what do you clean them dear Liza, dear Liza?
With what do you clean them dear Liza, with what?

With a tooth brush and fluoride paste dear Henry, dear Henry.
With a brush and fluoride paste dear Henry, cleans well.

And how do you keep them dear Liza, dear Liza?
And how do you keep them dear Liza, just how?

I eat fruit and veggies dear Henry, dear Henry.
I eat fruit and veggies dear Henry, eat well.

Do you have any helpers dear Liza, dear Liza?
Do you have any helpers dear Liza, some friends?

Yes, I go to the dentist dear Henry, dear Henry.
Yes, I go to the dentist dear Henry, my friend.

Can I do that for my teeth dear Liza, dear Liza?
Can I do that for my teeth dear Liza, with mine?

Yes, just eat well and drink well dear Henry, dear Henry.
Play safely and clean well, dear Henry that's it!



Sparkle, Sparkle Little Teeth

(©Dental Health Services Victoria 2003.
Tune Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Sparkle, sparkle little teeth.
Some above and some beneath.
Brush them after every meal.
Clean and fresh they'll always feel.
Sparkle, sparkle little teeth.
Some above and some beneath.

Snacking, snacking, it's okay.
Healthy eating is the way.
Eat fresh veggies, fruit and cheese.
Dentist will say "I am pleased!"
Snacking, snacking, it's okay.
Healthy eating is the way.



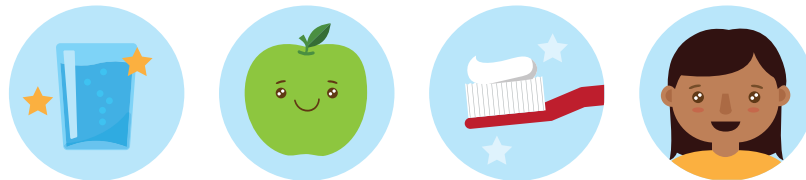
Sample Toothbrushing Program letter to parents/carers

Dear (Insert name)

[Insert early learning service] is introducing a new program 'Happy Teeth' to help encourage children to look after their teeth and help prevent tooth decay.

As you know, healthy teeth are a very important part of a child's self-esteem, so we want to make sure all our children are happy and can smile with confidence.

As an early learning service, we will help children learn about oral health. We will need your support to promote the following key messages:



The Happy Teeth Program will include daily toothbrushing in our service. This means children in our care will brush their teeth at least once during the day and we are aiming for after the lunch time meal.

We hope that children brushing their teeth in our service and brushing their teeth at your home will help create some great toothbrushing behaviours.

By (insert date) your child will need to bring:

- 1 x small soft toothbrush
- 1 x tube of age appropriate fluoride toothpaste
- 1 x toothbrush case (will need to hold toothpaste)

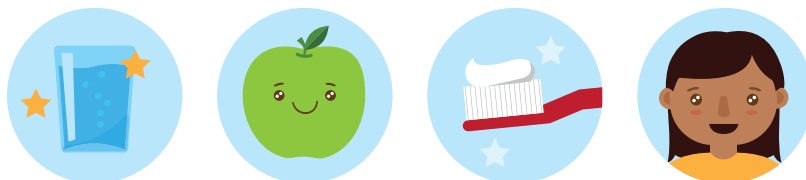
These items will stay at our service and we will make sure they are cleaned daily.

Stay tuned for exciting program updates plus tips in our newsletter on how to keep your child's teeth healthy and happy.

Thanks for supporting our new Happy Teeth Program.

Kind regards
(Insert name)

Sample Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy information letter to parents/carers



Dear (Insert name)

Did you know to help prevent tooth decay, daily toothbrushing and healthy eating habits need to start at an early age?

At [insert early learning service], we want to make sure all our children are healthy and have 'Happy Teeth'. To help achieve this we would like to have in place a Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy.

We would love you to have a look at the draft policy attached and provide some valuable feedback:

1. Do you think there is anything missing from the policy?
2. Do you have any concerns about the policy?
3. Would you recommend any changes to the policy?

We look forward to hearing from you about all the exciting and healthy things happening in our facility.

Together we can help make a difference with the health our children!

Kind regards
(Insert name)

How to access more resources

To access more resources in a hard copy or an electronic version, visit the Happy Teeth Program website <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program>

Parent and Carer Resources



Brochures/Booklets

- My First Dental Visit Booklet
- Teething Booklet
- Keeping Teeth and Gums Healthy during Pregnancy Booklet
- Thumbsucking Booklet
- Preventing Infant Tooth Decay Booklet
- Drink Well, Eat Well, Clean Well Brochure

Posters

- Sugar in Common Food Items Poster
- How to Keep Your Teeth Healthy Poster

Other

- Songs and rhymes USB
- Drink Well, Eat Well, Clean Well Sticker
- How to Brush Mirror Sticker
- My Toothbrushing Calendar

Download from here:

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/oral-health/resources/happy-teeth-program>



Acid attack	Bacteria in plaque produces acids when sugar is eaten. Each time sugar is consumed it results in an acid attack.
Anterior teeth	Front teeth.
Babies	Aged 3-12 months.
Bacteria	Small or microscopic germs.
Caries	Tooth decay, cavities or holes in teeth caused by acids produced by bacteria in plaque, as a result of the breakdown of dietary sugars.
Casein	A protein found naturally in milk products, which forms a coating on teeth, providing protection against acids formed in plaque.
Children	Aged 3 years and older.
Deciduous (baby) teeth	First set of teeth.
Dental Assistant	Dental Assistants provide clinical assistance to dental practitioners.
Dental Hygienist	Dental hygienists provide oral health assessment, diagnosis, treatment, management, and education for the prevention of oral diseases to promote healthy oral behaviours to patients of all ages. Their scope may include periodontal/gum treatment, preventive services and other oral care.
Dental Therapist	Dental Therapists provide oral health assessment, diagnosis, treatment, management and preventive services for children and adolescents. With appropriate additional education and training, dental therapists can also provide these services for adults.
Dental Practitioner	Oral health professionals who are registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. For example, dentist, oral health therapist, dental therapist or dental hygienist.
Dentist	Dentists provide a full range of general dental services to patients of all ages.
Enamel	Outside layer of teeth.
Erupt/Eruption	Teeth coming through the gums as part of normal development.

Everyday foods	Foods and drinks that are not likely to stick to teeth and contain very low amounts of sugar and acids. Milk does have natural sugar but is tooth-friendly.
Fluoride	Compounds of fluorine. Small quantities occur naturally in water and at optimal levels make teeth more resistant to tooth decay.
Gum disease	A common form of gum disease is gingivitis – inflammation that affects the gums only. Plaque causes the gums to become red, swollen and tender.
Mini meals	Nutritional small meals provided.
Newborn	Aged 0-3 months.
Oral Health Therapist	Oral Health Therapists are dual qualified as a dental therapist and dental hygienist. Oral Health Therapists provide oral health assessment, diagnosis, treatment, management and preventive services for children and adolescents. If educated and trained in a program of study approved by the National Board, Oral Health Therapists provide these services for adults of all ages. Oral Health Therapists provide dental hygiene services to patients of all ages. Oral Health Therapists are also qualified to lead individual, group and community oral health promotion strategies.
Plaque	A sticky film which forms on teeth; in which the bacteria live.
Permanent (adult) teeth	Second (and final) set of teeth.
Sometimes foods	Foods such as those that are not essential or part of a healthy dietary pattern. These foods contain moderate or high amounts of sugar.
Toddlers	Aged 1-3 years.
Tooth decay (dental caries)	Tooth decay, cavities or holes in teeth, caused by the acids produced by bacteria in plaque, as a result of the breakdown of dietary sugars.

Books

Arthur Tricks the Tooth Fairy by Marc Brown - Children's sticker book

Let's Find out about Toothpaste by Kathy Barabas - Illustrations and text describe the process of making toothpaste from raw ingredients.

The Tooth Book – Dr Suess - Children's book for oral health

Games and apps

Colgate Dental Health games and apps for children (2 to 6 years)

- Tooth Defenders: Snack Swat
- Tooth Defenders: Memory
- Super Puzzle

www.colgate.com.au/oral-health-education/educational-resources

Healthy recipes

Eat for Health

www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/healthy-recipes

feedAustralia (Department of Health)

A world leading nutritional education and preventative health initiative that provides early childhood education and care providers with a free online menu planning tool.

www.feedaustralia.org.au

Healthier.Happier. Queensland Government

www.healthier.qld.gov.au/food/recipes

Healthy Lunches - Raising Children Network

www.raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/nutrition-fitness/breakfast-lunches/healthy-lunches

Healthy Lunchbox tips, planners and resources – Healthy Eating Advisory Service

www.heas.health.vic.gov.au/schools/healthy-lunchboxes

Healthy toddler foods - Raising Children Network

www.raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/nutrition-fitness/food-recipes

10 tips to a healthy back to school lunchbox

<https://www.darlingdowns.health.qld.gov.au/about-us/our-stories/feature-articles/10-tips-to-a-healthy-back-to-school-lunchbox>

Puzzles and play materials

Modern Teaching Aids

P: 1800 251 497

E: sales@teaching.com.au

W: www.teaching.com.au

- Good Hygiene Puzzle (set of four)
Contains four wooden puzzles, measuring 20cm x 20cm (Ages three+ years).

Resources and information

Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures program (Preschool – aged 3 to 5 years)

This is a free program designed to teach children the importance of good oral hygiene and hand washing. Free teachers guide, posters, stickers, story book and hand wash.

www.colgatebsbf.com.au

Dental Education Shop

PO Box 275, Camperdown NSW 1450

P: (02) 9557 9330

E: edusales@dentaleducationshop.com.au

W: www.dentaleducationshop.com.au/

Early Years Health and Development Portal (Department of Education)

Free tools and resources on early years health and development.

www.learningplace.eq.edu.au/cx/resources/file/d1fe14fb-4339-4210-80e7-27637e4e6411/1/portal/index.html

Growing good habits (Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service, Queensland Child and Youth Clinical Network and The University of Queensland)

Offers tips and advice on common lifestyle issues in maintaining a healthy weight, ideas for physical activity, practical ways to improve nutrition, child-friendly and tasty recipes with news and research on childhood obesity. Includes a health professionals section - an online hub for the most up-to-date and evidence-based information, resources and tools, and research. www.growinggoodhabits.health.qld.gov.au

Healthy Kids Project (Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service)

Offers free health professional development for the early childhood education and care sector.

Quarterly electronic newsletter with links to webinars, key resources, relevant research and practical ideas for supporting children's health and development.

www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/our-services/community-health-services/centre-childrens-health-wellbeing/healthy-kids/

Henry Schein Halas

P: 1300 658 822

W: www.henryschein.com.au

- Group Zoo Animals
Five pack of assorted plush toys with flexible arms to hold the toothbrush, sites to teach flossing and brushing techniques.

Kangaroo Education

P: 1800 251 475

E: sales@hop.com.au

W: www.hop.com.au

- Play Food Assortment
Packed full of props to give children a tactile and visual sense of food and nutrition.

A2Z Montessori

P: 1300 723 725

W: www.a2zmontessori.com.au

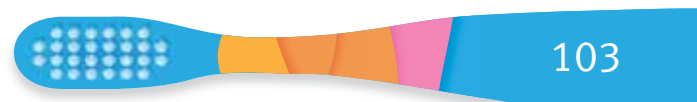
- Teeth Cleaning Teaching Model with Tooth Brush

Raising Children Network – Australian Parenting website

Information translated into everyday language to help parents and carers raising children and caring for themselves. Extensive information includes videos, recipes, fact sheets, guidelines, tools and practical ideas.

www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.raisingchildren.net.au/babies/health-daily-care



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Australian Bureau of Statistics. National Health Survey: First results 2017-18 financial year. [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/national-health-survey-first-results/latest-release#data-download>
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