

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

This information sheet informs you about the supervised daily toothbrushing programme that is organised in your child's school or early year's setting.

1. Invitation to take part:

All children under five at your school or early year's setting are invited to take part in a supervised toothbrushing programme. Before you decide whether you wish your child to participate, it is important you understand why this is being done and what is involved. Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or you would like more information about.

2. Why has my child been asked to take part?

A supervised toothbrushing programme is an ideal opportunity to help keep children's teeth healthy. Brushing teeth twice daily is recommended.

3. Does my child have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether you wish your child to take part. If you do, the responsible parent/guardian will be asked to sign a consent form. Written consent will last until your child leaves the reception class or early year's setting. You can change your mind and withdraw consent at any time without giving reason.

4. How will it benefit my child?

Research has shown that children who start brushing at a young age are less likely to experience tooth decay than those who start later.

Evidence shows that using a family fluoride toothpaste with the correct amount of fluoride, as recommended by dental experts, can help to prevent tooth decay.

5. Will it cost me anything?

This programme is free to all children under five at your school or early year's setting.

6. Are there any risks or reasons why my child should not take part?

This programme is an extension of home toothbrushing. The toothpaste used is permitted for over the counter purchase.

Some young children taking fluoride supplements and or drinking fluoridated water whilst their teeth are forming may develop white spots on their teeth. This is called dental fluorosis.

There is no fluoride in the Devon water supply so the risk of fluorosis is low.

If in doubt talk to your dentist or health visitor.

School staff will be supervising children, ensuring that the children only place a small pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste on their brush. It is important that parents/ guardians supervise children's toothbrushing at home.

Everyone has small amounts of fluoride in their food and drink. There is no reliable evidence of allergy ever occurring.

Parents can also be assured that regular checks are in place to ensure standards for quality toothbrushing and hygiene and safety are maintained.

.....continued overleaf

What will happen if my child takes part?

If you wish your child to participate your child will be:

1. provided with their own toothbrush and toothpaste in the school and it will be replaced as required
2. supervised daily by the staff who will be following a set of standards, which include the amount of toothpaste used and cross contamination controls.

Will I need to brush my child's teeth at home?

It is very important that parents understand that this programme does not replace a child's toothbrushing routine at home.

Brushing with family fluoride toothpaste – general guidance

Brush with a family fluoride toothpaste as soon as the first teeth come through.

Help your child to brush their teeth up to the age of eight.

Brush your child's teeth twice a day; always brush just before bedtime and at least one other time during the day.

Use family fluoride toothpaste containing more than 1000 parts per million fluoride content to a maximum of 1500 parts per million fluoride content. This information can be found on the product box and tube.

Use only a smear of toothpaste on the brush if your child is under three years of age or a small pea-sized amount if over the age of three.

Encourage your child not to rinse after brushing but only to spit out the excess toothpaste. Keep the toothpaste out of reach of children and don't let them lick from the tube.

What can I do to help keep my child's teeth healthy?

Key messages:

- Thoroughly brush your child's teeth twice a day using a fluoride toothpaste; always brush before bedtime and at least one other time during the day.
- Don't give your child sugary food and drinks between meals and particularly last thing at night – keep them to mealtimes.
- At night time only give water to drink. Milk can damage the teeth if drunk during the night.
- Take your child to see a dentist regularly.

Contact for further information

If you need additional information about the programme please contact the NHS Oral Health Improvement Team that is providing the expert support to this programme on Tel: 01392 405705.