

Messages for a Healthy Mouth

NSW Health has developed 5 easy to remember messages for a healthy mouth for your preschool child:

Eat Well

- Provide healthy snacks like fresh fruit, cheese, vegetable sticks, wholegrain sandwiches and soups everyday.
- Limit sugary foods like lollies, biscuits, cakes, chocolate, muesli bars, ice cream to special occasions.
- Sticky, sweet foods, such as honey, on a baby's dummy can cause tooth decay.

Drink Well

- Breast feed your baby and **limit night time on-demand feeding** after 6 months.
- Put your baby to bed **without** a bottle.
- Only put breast milk or infant formula in feeding bottles and take the bottle away once your child has finished feeding.
- Limit sugary drinks like soft drink, juice, cordial, flavoured milk. Eating fruit is preferable to drinking fruit juice.
- Encourage children to drink tap water from an early age, especially in-between meals (boil water for children under 12 months). Tap water is safe in Australia. It contains fluoride, which helps protect teeth.
- Introduce a cup from 6 months of age.
- Wean children from the bottle at around 12 months.

Clean Well

- Start cleaning your baby's teeth as soon as they appear, at around 6 months, using a child-sized, soft toothbrush, **but not with toothpaste**.
- From around **18 months of age** clean your toddler's teeth twice a day with a small pea-sized amount of low fluoride (baby) toothpaste, and a child sized soft toothbrush. They should spit out, but not swallow and not rinse. Toothpaste may be introduced earlier based on the advice of a dental professional.
- Help your children brush their teeth until they are 8 years old. This makes sure their teeth are properly cleaned.

Dental Fact Sheet

Language / Messages for a Healthy Mouth / April 2011

Play Well

- Supervise your child when they are playing.
- Children should wear a helmet when riding a bike.

Stay Well

- Lift the lip to check your child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears at about 6 months.
- Have your child's teeth checked at all child health visits.
- Take your child to a dental professional by the end of their 2nd year.
- Keep your own teeth and gums clean and healthy.

Interpreter Services

If you require an interpreter to contact the above services or translation, please call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50.

For other multilingual health information visit www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au