

DENTAL POLICY

PURPOSE:

To encourage oral / dental hygiene amongst children and families.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The centre aims to plan and implement an educational program on dental care by:

- Establishing the mealtime routine of “swish, swish, swallow” before leaving the table. Actively discourage babies being put to bed with bottles of milk, fruit juice or sweetened liquids. Providing small and spontaneous group activities which reinforce the importance of good dental care procedures.
- Invite health professionals to speak to children and families about maintaining a healthy diet, brushing and flossing your teeth daily and having regular dental checkups.
- To make available up to date dental information to families through the parent library, newsletters, pamphlets, information books and posters displayed throughout the centre.
- Menu planning will incorporate and encourage healthy eating through the use of a variety of raw and cooked fruits and vegetables.

Dental Health Tips for Parents of Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers

- To soothe the irritation of teething, give your baby a teething ring to chew on
- Don't give sweetened drinks from the bottle. Establish regular bottle feeds and, if your baby needs a drink between feeds, use cooled boiled water.
- After feeding, to prevent tooth decay, wipe your baby's teeth with a moist cloth. At about eight months, start your infant drinking from a cup as this reduces the time that decay-producing sugars are in contact with the teeth.
- Introduce your infant to tooth cleaning as soon as teeth appear. As infants are unable to control swallowing, a small smear of low strength fluoride toothpaste (or not toothpaste at all) should be used.
- At about eighteen months, take your child to the family dentist for a check-up to become accustomed to regular dental visits.
- You should brush your children's teeth and encourage them to learn how to brush correctly, using a small pea sized quantity of low strength

fluoride toothpaste. Brush 2 times a day, after breakfast and before bed.

- Children do not have the manual dexterity to effectively clean their teeth until the age of approximately 9-10 years. Children should be encouraged to clean their own teeth with a parent/carer doing a final follow up brush to ensure effective plaque control.
- For preschoolers avoid sweet snacks and sweet drinks between meals. The possibility of tooth decay is directly related to the number of times that sweet things are in contact with the teeth.
- Seek your dentist's advice without delay if your children's teeth become damaged – whether loosened or just chipped
- If a baby tooth is dislodged do not attempt to straighten or replace it. Take the child to your dentist straight away.
- If an adult tooth is knocked out (for staff or older children):
 - If clean, replace as soon as possible
 - If dirty, gently clean with saline (best option), water or milk, then replace as soon as possible
 - If tooth remains out of mouth, store it in milk and seek dental advice immediately.
- Drink fluoridated tap water every day. If you are not sure if your local water is fluoridated, check with your local council
- Give your child foods that make them chew.
- Use dental floss daily from 3-4 years of age
- Do not put honey on dummies to get children to sleep

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Reviewed: 19 May 2006 by M Duffy-Fagan, Dr D van Eldik (Endodontist), K van Eldik (Dental Hygienist) – family at centre

Source: Australian Dental Association of NSW
Children's Hospital Westmead
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