

ORAL HEALTH

What is oral health?

Oral health is part of general health and wellbeing and contributes to the development of a healthy child as well as school readiness. In 2019 in England, just under a quarter (25%) of 5-year-olds had experienced tooth decay, having on average 3 or 4 teeth affected. The vast majority of tooth decay was untreated. The areas with poorer dental health tend to be in the north and in the more deprived local authorities.

PHE recommends all children:

- Reduce the quantity and frequency of foods and drinks that contain sugar, only give sweet foods and dried fruit at mealtimes
- Squashes sweetened with sugar, fizzy drinks, soft drinks and juice drinks have no place in a child's daily diet
- Limit the amount of fruit juice and smoothies your child drinks to a maximum of 150 ml (1 portion) in total per day and drink it with meals to reduce the risk of tooth decay
- Always ask for sugar-free medicine

With the inclusion of oral health in the EYFS framework (2021) Ofsted have stated that they will not expect providers to brush teeth or look in children's mouths. The expectation will be that providers can support children's oral healthy by:

- Asking if families are registered with a dentist and sharing information about local dentists and the importance of good oral health
- Sharing information with parents
- Understanding local need – making links with your local dentist
- Reading books about tooth brushing
- Singing songs and rhymes to encourage tooth brushing awareness
- Including healthy teeth role play in children's activities
- Promoting healthy eating and drinking in the setting and at home

Risk Factors

Children are more at risk of developing tooth decay if they are:

- Eating a poor diet
- Brushing their teeth less than twice per day with fluoride toothpaste
- From deprived backgrounds



The EYFS Statutory Framework states:

Page 32 - 3.45 – Providers must promote the good health, including the oral health, of children attending the setting.

Public Health England Healthmatters Preventing tooth decay

Top 3 interventions for preventing tooth decay

- 1** Reduce the consumption of foods and drinks that contain sugars
- 2** Brush teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste (1350-1500ppm), last thing at night and at least on one other occasion. After brushing, spit don't rinse
- 3** Take your child to the dentist when the first tooth erupts, at about 6 months and then on a regular basis

Under 3s should use a smear of toothpaste

3 to 6 year olds should use a pea sized amount

Parents/carers should brush or supervise tooth brushing until their child is at least 7

For more information

[Child oral health: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Health matters: child dental health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Oral health - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](http://education.gov.uk)

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