

Remember:

- Teeth are meant to last a lifetime
- Children need to be taught good hygiene habits for a lifetime of healthy teeth
- Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste and help children brush and floss twice a day
- Take your child to visit your dental professional regularly
- Encourage healthy snacks and water
- Professionally made mouthguards are highly recommended for children who play sports



Oral Health for Children aged 3-12



Creating Smiles with Care



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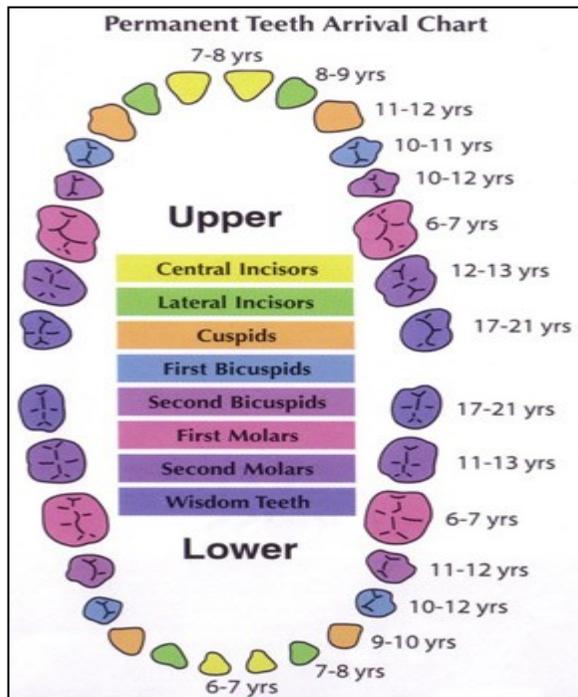
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Oral Health for Children ages 3-12

By the time your child is 3 years old they will have all of their baby (deciduous) teeth. It is important to keep these teeth clean and decay free so that the permanent teeth have the best start and will last for the next 70-80 years!!

Between the ages of 6-12 your child will lose all the baby teeth as the permanent teeth emerge. With a little daily attention to oral care and diet, you can teach your child to have healthy teeth for a lifetime.



Tooth brushing

Plaque is the sticky, soft layer of bacteria that forms on the teeth and needs to be removed to prevent decay and gum problems. Brushing twice a day is proven to be better than once a day and the brush before bedtime is especially important.

Children should be encouraged to clean their own teeth. However, the coordination needed to brush teeth effectively is something that needs to be learned. For this reason, it is important for parents and carers to assist with brushing at least once per day. Gently 'lift the lip' often to watch for any changes on the surface of the teeth.

Toothpaste

Fluoride is the best protection that we have against decay and the decay patterns that a child will follow throughout life are started at an early age. Because children under the age of 6 tend to swallow rather than spit out excess toothpaste they need to use a children's toothpaste with a lower fluoride content (400ppm). After the age of 6, children should use a toothpaste with a normal concentration of 1000ppm. This is clearly visible on any tube of toothpaste.

Flossing

Although difficult to master, it is important for children to start flossing as soon as the teeth touch together. Speak to your dental professional to get some good coaching ideas on this.

Tooth Friendly Diet Tips

- Encourage healthy snacks like dairy products, unsalted popcorn, fruits and veges in place of sugary snacks. Try to keep these readily available for children to grab
- Limit intake of acidic drinks like colas (diet and regular), sports drinks and fruit juices. When having these, drink them all at once instead of sipping all day and keep them to a minimum.
- Drink water!

Professional Advice and Care

Start regular dental visits early as this can prevent little problems becoming big ones. It is important to treat these visits as routine and positive so that the child does not have a negative experience early on. Avoid using negative words like drill, needle or pain – questions should be answered honestly but not too specifically. Your dental professional can help you with this.

