

# Oral Health FACT SHEET

## TEENS

Keeping on with good habits

By the age of 12 –14 years all adult teeth should have appeared.  
Wisdom teeth can appear in late teens but can be much later.

### Brushing

**Advice:** Brush teeth twice a day for 2 minutes– last thing before bed and at least one other time in the day using a pea sized amount of fluoride tooth paste with at least 1350ppm (the amount of fluoride in the tube) and a soft toothbrush. An electric brush can be helpful but what is important is that teeth are cleaned well. Parents/ Carers still need to check that teeth are being brushed regularly. The use of disclosing tablets can be really useful to show if any areas are not being cleaned effectively as they show up any plaque (dirt) after brushing. Cleaning in between teeth needs to start and the dental team can help with what to use and how to use interdental cleaners. After brushing spitting out excess toothpaste is recommended and don't rinse out with water or mouthwash unless the dentist has recommended otherwise. There are a number of apps to download to help encourage brushing, try the Brush DJ app.

### Diet

**Remember Sugar +  
Plaque = Acid**

'Acid attacks' can damage the teeth and cause decay. Teeth need time to recover from the attacks so make snack times a healthy choice for teeth. The risk of tooth decay increases with the number of times that teeth are exposed to sugar (in foods and drinks) each day.

**Advice:** Keep any sugary foods to mealtimes. Healthy snacks for teeth can include fresh fruit/veg, toast, cheese, pitta bread etc. Watch out for dried fruit as a snack, keep these to meal times if given.

Chewing sugar free gum can be beneficial after meals as it increases saliva flow which helps to neutralise plaque acids.



## Dental visits

**Advice:** Going to the dentist as often as the dentist recommends is very important for preventative advice and watching how teeth are developing. Possible orthodontic (braces) treatment might be needed and the dentist can give further advice about this. If any piercings in the mouth are being considered talk to the dental team first to get some advice.



## Drinks

**Advice:** Avoid cans of fizzy drinks, sports drinks, sweetened flavoured milk and fruit juice and fruit/sweetened teas as these contain sugar which can lead to tooth decay. Encourage the drinking of plain water throughout the day as it is great for the body and teeth. Milk is also a good drink for anytime. If sugary drinks and juices are drunk then dilute well and keep to mealtimes only. Sweet or fizzy drinks at bedtime causes tooth decay as saliva flow at night is reduced and so teeth are at more risk from acid attacks, water is best.

## Accidents

**Advice:** If taking part in any contact sport protect teeth by using a gum shield. Ask your dental team for advice. If an adult tooth is knocked out pick it up by the crown, if it is dirty rinse with milk or running water not disinfectant. Hold the crown and make sure it is the right way round push the tooth back into place. Keep the tooth in place by biting on a clean handkerchief. If you can't do this then store in milk. Go to the dentist within 1 hour. Get immediate help if you are worried about the child's breathing or any bleeding does not stop after pressure has been applied for 20 minutes.

## Smoking

**Advice:** smoking is bad for your teeth and gums. It makes breath smell and it will stain teeth. Smokers are more at risk of getting mouth cancer.