



Oral Health Information Sheet for Parents

An Overview of Oral Health

Oral hygiene is very important in achieving overall good oral health. It is beneficial for us all to have a clear understanding of how to support our children with oral health.

Public Health England have said that just under 25% of children under the age of 5 experience tooth decay. That's almost 1 in 4 children. Too many sugary foods and drinks as well as not brushing teeth twice a day can lead to tooth decay.

It is therefore important for us to support children with oral health, as their first experiences can have a great impact on the rest of their lives. By supporting them, we can teach them about their mouths, introduce them to good habits and dental visits, helping to put them at ease and gain trust.

By working in partnership with parents, we can successfully promote good oral health.

Tooth Decay in Early Years

There are three key points that we should remember to help prevent tooth decay:

- ♦ Reduce the consumption of foods which have a high sugar content
- ♦ Brush teeth twice a day
- ♦ Take your child to the dentist as soon as their first tooth comes along and attend check ups every 6 months thereafter

How we support Oral Health here at Hoole CE Primary

At Hoole CE Primary, we provide all of our children with a nutritional and healthy lunch as well as fruit and milk for snack. We also ensure that the children have access to fresh drinking water from their water bottles all day.

Around our Early Years Classroom, you will find an oral health display which helps us promote good oral hygiene habits to the children within our care as well as our practitioners. We also plan to have a Dentist visit our Early Years children to share good habits regarding keeping our teeth healthy and clean.

What oral health related activities do we provide throughout the year?

As we follow a play based curriculum, we have outlined how we promote good oral health across the year.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The children have the opportunity to build on their relationships by coming together to carry out activities. This could be during many activities such as dentist role play, sharing their experiences through circle time and other group activities. They will learn about feelings as they consider how visiting the dentist can make them feel. We carry out our oral health activities to help the children gain self-confidence when brushing their teeth or visiting the dentist.

Physical Development

As part of our Oral Health display, there is a set of large teeth and toothbrushes which the children can use to practice their teeth brushing skills. The practitioners will help them to gain an understanding that oral health is an important part of their daily hygiene routine. We also teach the children about healthy and unhealthy foods and provide food activities that allow them to taste healthy options.

Communication and Language

We encourage the children to speak about their experiences when visiting the dentist, which is great for their listening skills, understanding skills and speaking skills. The children also enjoy asking each other questions and listening to what their friends have to say.

Literacy

The children have the opportunity to enjoy occupational themed books that are both fiction and non-fiction. This gives the children the opportunity to gain an understanding of oral hygiene routines and some fun facts about teeth. They can also listen to stories about taking a trip to the dentist which will help them understand what to expect as well as put their mind at ease.

Mathematics

The children enjoy using the set of large teeth to count how many teeth are in their mouths. This is quite a high number so they often need support with this, but it's still a great way for them to gain an awareness of number names, which they will often repeat. The children also learn how much toothpaste they need to use on their brush. We encourage the children to use the 2 minute sand timer when role playing or brushing the large set of teeth.

Understanding the World

Throughout the year, children will have the opportunity to explore the role of both the dentist and the patient through their role play activities, which they always enjoy. We teach the children what a toothbrush is and what it is used for. The children can also use technology to watch videos about the dentist as well as enjoy some interactive stories. The children are encouraged to share their experiences of trips to the dentist, which will often involve them talking about the people who are close to them.

Expressive Art and Design

Children can role play dentist and patients which they always enjoy. This encourages them to play alongside each other and to use their imaginations. We teach children new songs, one of which is about how to brush your teeth.



Top Tips for Children's Oral Health

- ♦ Eating habits are shaped when children are very young and can last a lifetime
- ♦ Eating healthy food that is low in sugar helps to prevent tooth decay and also encourages good general health
- ♦ Eating chopped fruit and vegetables does not cause tooth decay. Bread, breadsticks, rice cakes, cheese, natural yoghurt or fromage frais are all tooth friendly snacks
- ♦ Dried fruit given as a snack (such as raisins) increases the risk of tooth decay
- ♦ Water and milk are the best tooth-friendly drinks
- ♦ Freshly prepared fruit juice and smoothies should be given only once a day and with a meal as they contain a high concentration of sugar
- ♦ Ask for sugar free medicines where possible
- ♦ Children aged 3 to 6 years of age should use a pea sized amount of toothpaste

Finding a Dentist

If you are unsure of your local family dentist, you can use the NHS website to find your closest one: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Further Guidance, Helpful Information and Videos on Oral Health for Early Years

If you require any support or guidance with oral health at home, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the Early Years Team who will try their best to support you and provide you with further information.

Additional Information:

<http://www.child-smile.org.uk/parents-and-carers/toothbrushing/index.aspx>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/>

<https://www.startingwell.org.uk/>

