

Post Natal Oral Health Advice

Greater Manchester Orthodontic MCN

Author Sarah Glossop. Version 1. April 2021

This leaflet is aimed at providing advice to families on how to care for their baby's oral health and teeth in the first years.

Registering with a Dentist

You should ensure your baby is registered with a dentist before they are 6 months old.

Usually this is the same dentist that you would see

To find a dentist in your local area visit <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Bottle advice

Only breast milk or first instant formula should be given to a baby in a bottle for the first 6 months.

From 6 months, water can be introduced in the bottle if required. Once your baby is 1 year old, **feeding from a bottle should be discouraged.**

At 6 months you can introduce your baby to a drinking cup. Using an open cup or a free-flow cup without a valve will help your baby learn to sip and is better for your baby's teeth.



Free-flow cup



Bottle with breast milk or first instant formula

Only milk or water should be given in a bottle or cup. You should avoid:

- Sugared drinks e.g. fruit juices, cordial, fizzy pop
- Cereal drinks
- Chocolate powder
- Tea

Comfort sucking from a bottle on sweetened drinks causes tooth decay in young children. Drinks flow very slowly through a teat, which means the sugary substance will be in contact with their teeth for longer.

Example of early tooth decay



Dummies

Orthodontic dummies are flatter than traditional cherry-shaped dummies. They're shaped to encourage your baby to suck in the same way as when they are breastfeeding.



Orthodontic Dummy



Non-Orthodontic Dummy

Breastfeeding should be established before using a dummy, usually when the baby is 4 weeks old.

There is some evidence to suggest that using a dummy in the first six months reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). However, the evidence is unclear, and experts are still divided on the issue. More research is required on this subject.

You should try to wean your baby off his dummy when he's **between six months and 12 months old** to avoid interfering with the babies first teeth

Weaning

What is weaning?

- Weaning is introducing your baby to solid foods; this is also known as **complementary feeding**.
- Weaning usually starts when your baby is around 6 months old.
- Waiting until around 6 months gives your baby time to develop so they can cope fully with solid foods:
 - Your baby will be more able to feed themselves

- Your baby will be better at moving food around their mouth, chewing and swallowing it

Your baby should be introduced to a varied diet, alongside their usual breast milk or first infant formula. Solid food is not given as a replacement, but alongside their usual breast milk or first instant formula.

When to start brushing

You should begin brushing your babies' teeth once the first tooth is visible, which is usually at 6 months.

The first teeth to erupt are normally the lower incisor teeth

Lower incisor teeth



Parents should brush their child's teeth 2x daily every time for them, until they are old enough for you to trust them to do something challenging such as washing their own hair.

Use a toothbrush that has a small head.



It is okay to use adult toothpaste for all children.

- Upto 3 years use a smear of toothpaste
- >3 years use a peas sized amount

If they don't like the flavour, you can use child's toothpaste. Just be sure it has **at least 1250 ppm (parts per million) of fluoride** to help form strong teeth.

References:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/bottle-feeding-advice/>