

## **Supervised tooth brushing Information for Parents/Guardians**

This information sheet informs you about the supervised tooth brushing programme that is being held in your child's school/nursery, and frequently asked questions.

The supervised tooth brushing programme is specifically designed for children under the age of 5. This is the best age to introduce correct tooth brushing technique and form good behaviours, which will last a lifetime. The children learn to brush their teeth themselves, correctly.

By setting up a supervised tooth brushing programme in school/nursery, it allows the children to incorporate it into their daily routine and follow the good practice at home.

**Invitation to take part** – All children under the age of 5 are invited to take part in a supervised tooth brushing programme at school/nursery. Before you decide if you wish for your child to take part, it is important that you know why this is being done, and what is involved. If you still have questions after reading this information sheet, please contact us.

**Why has my child been chosen to take part in this programme?** Evidence shows that brushing teeth effectively using fluoride toothpaste is the best way to prevent tooth decay, and brushing at school/nursery is the best way to keep teeth healthy. All children in the nursery/reception classes have been invited.

**Does my child have to take part?** It is up to you to decide if you would like your child to take part. If you do, then you will be asked to sign a consent form, which will need to be returned to school/nursery before they can take part. You can change your mind and withdraw consent at any time.

**How will this programme benefit my child?** Evidence shows that children who effectively brush their teeth at a young age are less likely to experience tooth decay and form behaviours which will last a lifetime.

**Will this cost me anything?** No, this programme is completely funded by NHS England & NHS Improvement South West.

**What toothpaste will be used?** The toothpaste used in the programme is age appropriate (1450ppm Fluoride) mild mint flavour. If children are sensitive to this toothpaste, we can also supply non-flavoured toothpaste.

**Are there any risks or reasons why my child should not take part?** There are very minimal risks associated with this programme. Some young children may be taking fluoride supplements or drinking fluoridated water as well as swallowing toothpaste and this can cause Fluorosis (white spots in the enamel of the teeth). This can be eliminated by encouraging the children to spit out the toothpaste and not to swallow it. Please note - there is no fluoride in the water supply in Devon so the risk of Fluorosis is low.

**Will staff be trained?** Yes, all staff involved in the programme will receive training from a qualified Oral Health Educator.

**What safeguarding measures are in place?** As well as staff being trained, there will be an audit process in place to make sure the programme is being followed to ensure compliance.

**Will my child have their own toothbrush?** Yes, this is a very important part of the programme. All children will have their own toothbrush which will be identified as theirs. It will correspond with the storage unit which has been designed specifically for the storage of toothbrushes, eliminating cross contamination. Full cross infection control procedures are in place.

**How will the programme work?** Children will sit or stand, staff will dispense the toothpaste onto the child's toothbrush using a suitable cross contamination method. Each child will then commence tooth brushing for 2 minutes under the supervision of staff. They will be encouraged and shown the correct tooth brushing technique. Once the 2 minutes is up, each child will replace their toothbrush into the storage unit, where it will then be taken to be cleaned along with the brushes. No water is needed for tooth brushing as we do not promote rinsing after brushing as this washes the good fluoride off the teeth.

**Will my child still need to brush their teeth at home?** Yes, this programme is in addition to brushing at home. The most important time to brush is at bedtime and one other time. Brushing for 2 minutes using a pea size blob of fluoride toothpaste is very important. You will find that your child is more willing to brush at home, having taken part in the school programme.

**Will I receive any further information?** Yes, your child will bring home an oral health goody bag which will contain a toothbrush, toothpaste, 2-minute timer and information on how to look after teeth for the whole family.

#### **Top Tips for brushing at home:**

- Start brushing children's teeth as soon as they appear.
- Use a smear of toothpaste for children under 3 (which contains 1000ppm fluoride)
- Use a pea size amount of toothpaste for children 3 and over (which contains 1450ppm fluoride)
- Do not rinse out with water or mouthwash after brushing, this will only dilute the fluoride in the toothpaste.
- Visit a dentist regularly. Children should start seeing a dentist by the age of 1.
- Reduce the amount of sugar in the diet by keeping sugary food or drink to meal times. Snack on fruit and low sugar options instead.

If you have any further questions, please contact us:

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