

# Tips for healthy teeth

First teeth, or baby teeth, are important as they help your child to speak and eat properly. If these teeth are badly decayed your child can experience a lot of pain. Permanent teeth are hidden in the gums and are damaged by decayed first teeth.

Tooth decay is higher in areas such as CHCH where there are low levels of fluoride in the water. Fluoride helps to protect against decay such as bacteria in plaque that changes sugars into acids that attack the teeth resulting in a hole or cavity.

**Decay can be prevented by good dental care and good eating habits.**

## Regular Tooth Brushing

Children's teeth need cleaning twice daily (morning and night). Use a small, soft toothbrush with a smear of fluoride toothpaste. After brushing just spit, as rinsing washes the fluoride coating off the teeth.

## Tooth Friendly Snacking

- Limit snacking to 2-3 times a day. Give teeth a rest between meals and snacks.
- ***Avoid sipping on juice or sweet drinks such as flavoured water, fizzy, powdered, sports and energy drinks. Do not put in drink bottles or weaning cups.*** If sweet drinks are offered keep them to meal times. Water and milk are the best drinks.
- Limit foods that stick to the teeth and are kept in the mouth a long time as these foods encourage decay. (e.g. fruit leathers, lollipops)
- Enjoy healthy snacks such as – fruit & vegetables sticks, sandwiches/crackers with peanut butter, vegemite, baked beans, cheese, hummus, and relish. Muffins, scones, pancakes, popcorn without sugar, yoghurt, custard in pottles, fruit smoothies.

## Free Dental care until 18 years of age

Children are entitled to free dental care at a school dental clinic from 1 year of age until year 8 of their schooling. From year 9 your family dentist provides free care under the Adolescent Health Agreement until 18 years of age.

### Savoury bread cases

*A filling easy lunch or after school snack:*

Trim the crusts from 12 slices of bread.

Spread margarine thinly on one side and press into muffin tins.

Fill each case with a selection of creamed corn, baked beans, spaghetti, diced bacon, chopped parsley, spring onion, tomato and top with a sprinkling of grated cheese.

Bake in the oven until lightly browned and cheese is bubbling.

Delicious!

## Healthy Nibbles

Nutrition Updates for Primary Schools

For more information visit: [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz)