



# Baby teeth are important!

**18 MONTHS  
- 6 YEARS**

## Tooth Tips for families

Baby teeth are important for eating, talking and smiling. Baby teeth also keep space for adult teeth and guide them into place. Tooth decay can cause pain, sleep problems and eating problems.

### After 12 months children should use a cup for drinking



Your child can drink tap water or plain full cream milk from a cup.



### Avoid fruit juice and other sweet drinks



Give tap water or plain full cream milk.



Children don't need fruit juice or sweet drinks. These can cause tooth decay. Give fresh fruit instead of juice.



## Offer healthy snacks and limit or avoid sweet foods



These include fresh fruit and vegetables, yoghurt, cheese and dry biscuits and sandwiches.



Eating foods high in sugar can lead to tooth decay.

## Clean your child's teeth and gums twice a day



Use a small soft toothbrush. Help your children to brush their teeth morning and night. Parents should help until the child is seven years of age.



**18 months to 6 years**  
Use a pea sized amount of *low fluoride* children's toothpaste.



**Adults and children 6 years and over**  
Use a pea sized amount of *regular fluoride* toothpaste.

## Have your child's teeth checked before 2 years of age

Your child should have their teeth checked for early signs of decay by 2 years of age. This might be done by your maternal and child health nurse, family doctor or dentist.

Visiting the dentist:

- All children up to 12 years of age can go to the public dental service. It is free for health care card holders and low cost for everyone else.
- You can call (03) 9341 1000, or 1800 833 039 (outside Melbourne Metro), or visit [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au) to find your nearest public clinic.
- You can also check the yellow pages to find a private dentist.

Talk to your dentist, maternal and child health nurse or family doctor for further information.

Your local dental clinic: