



Dr Grant McAree

Ask Dr. Grant



DR GRANT IS A RENOWNED COSMETIC DENTIST, TREATING PATIENTS BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. HE IS THE ONLY COSMETIC DENTIST IN THE REGION GRANTED PRACTISING PRIVILEGES AT NUFFIELD HOSPITAL, EXETER

Children's dental care – what's the story?

What are your tips for brushing?

As soon as the first teeth start coming through, from six months, use a children's toothbrush with a smear of toothpaste. Gentle coaxing is the key. If all else fails, get the toothpaste on their teeth with your finger: basically, the toothbrush is a vehicle for toothpaste. Once all 20 baby teeth are through, brush using small circular movements down to the gums. Stand behind your child, cradling their chin in your hand so you can reach the teeth easily. Supervise brushing until the age of seven.

What sort of toothbrush and paste?

The main thing is to use a brush with a small head and soft bristles and a toothpaste with at least 1000ppm (parts per million) of fluoride for kids up to three years old and 1350-1500ppm for kids three years old or older. Look for the British Dental Health Foundation logo. Try to get kids to spit out toothpaste, but don't panic if they don't. Children go through phases, and will do it themselves when you stop worrying.

Why does my child get cavities when they brush well?

This is one of the questions I'm most often asked. The simple answer is sugar and acid. Too much, too often is what causes tooth decay as the teeth are hit by a 30-minute acid attack afterwards. It's not the amount of sugar and acid, it's the total number of sugar

and acid hits per day. Too many and they'll get cavities.

How can I help prevent tooth decay?

Brushing twice a day for two minutes. Be more aware of sugar and acid in food and drink, remembering that processed foods, including some baby foods, can contain quite a lot of sugar. Check for 'sucrose', 'glucose', 'fructose' – it's all sugar. Confine sugary and acidic things to mealtimes. For snacks, try cheese, vegetables and fruit, but be warned that dried fruits like raisins are high in sugar. Don't give children sweet things right before bedtime, including hot chocolate.

What about sweets?

Believe it or not, ideally eat them all in one go. Grazing on sweets leaves the teeth constantly under attack. My advice is to pick a 'sweetie day'. This is better than allowing them to have a few sweets every day.

“BEFORE I GOT MARRIED, I HAD SIX THEORIES ABOUT BRINGING UP CHILDREN. NOW, I HAVE SIX CHILDREN AND NO THEORIES.”
– JOHN WILMOT

My child's adult teeth are coming through wonky ...

The new adult teeth can often come through strangely. However, the lips and tongue then put gentle, balanced pressure on them, pushing them into the correct position. A bit like 'natural' braces.

... and they look yellow!

Again, there's no need to worry – deciduous teeth are always whiter, so the comparison can be alarming.

My child's baby teeth are rotten

Some parents aren't overly worried about this, thinking they'll be replaced by adult teeth anyway. This is definitely not all right. Infections from baby teeth can affect adult teeth. Also, baby teeth are there for a reason – they maintain spaces in the jaws for adult teeth and guide them into position.

Any final advice?

Find a dentist you can trust and take your child with you as early as possible so they get used to the surroundings, preparing them for future visits. **DL**

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