

# Brush Up on Healthy Teeth

Simple Steps for Kids' Smiles



## 1 Start cleaning teeth early.

- As soon as the first tooth appears, begin cleaning by wiping with a clean, damp cloth every day.
- When more teeth come in, switch to a small, soft toothbrush.
- Begin using toothpaste with fluoride when your child is 2 years old.
- Use toothpaste with fluoride before age 2 if your child's doctor or dentist recommends it.

## 2 Use the right amount of fluoride toothpaste.

- Use only a small amount of toothpaste (about the size of a pea). *Fluoride is important for fighting cavities. But if children younger than 6 years old swallow too much fluoride, their permanent teeth may have white spots.*
- Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste and to rinse well after brushing.

## 3 Supervise brushing.

- Brush your child's teeth twice a day until your child has the skill to handle the toothbrush alone.
- Continue to closely watch brushing to make sure the child is doing a good job and using only a small amount of toothpaste.

## 4 Talk to your child's doctor or dentist.

- Ask the doctor or dentist about your child's specific fluoride needs.  
Children older than 6 months may need extra fluoride if the drinking water does not have enough.  
Children younger than 6 years old should not use a fluoride mouth rinse unless recommended by a doctor or dentist.
- After age 2, most children get the right amount of fluoride to help prevent cavities if they drink water that contains fluoride and brush their teeth with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.

Early care for your children's teeth will protect their smile and their health.

