

Toothpaste Use for Children Under 3

Toothpaste is recommended for children under 3 years of age who are at risk of developing early childhood tooth decay. To find out if your child is at risk, answer the questions below:

Does your child:

- live in an area with a non-fluoridated water supply, or a low natural fluoride level of less than 0.3mg/L? If you do not know, you can check with your local public health office.
- have visible plaque on teeth?
- have teeth brushed less than once a day?
- have a visible cavity or white chalky area on a tooth?
- have fillings, crowns, or extractions?
- see a dentist less than once a year?
- regularly eat foods or drink beverages that contain sugar (including natural sugars) between meals? This includes the use of a bottle or training cup filled with any liquid other than water.
- regularly use sweetened medicine?
- use a training cup or bottle after age 1?
- have a history of premature birth, with a low birth weight of less than 1500 grams (3 pounds)?
- have special health care needs?
- have a sibling, parent or caregiver with untreated cavities or existing fillings, crowns and extractions?
- have a sibling who had dental treatment under general anaesthetic?

If you answered **yes** to any of these questions, your child is at risk of early childhood tooth decay. **An adult should brush your child's teeth every day, using fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice.** Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste, not swallow it.

If you answered **no** to all of the questions, your child is not at risk of early childhood tooth decay. An adult should brush the child's teeth using a child sized toothbrush, **moistened only with water.**



Fluoride toothpaste, the size of a grain of rice

The Canadian Dental Association encourages dental assessments of infants within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth and no later than 1 year of age. CDA Board of Directors, March 2012

Toothpaste Use for Children Over Age 3

- Children over 3 can use a small amount of fluoridated toothpaste, the size of a green pea.
- Children should be assisted by an adult in brushing their teeth.
- Children should spit out the toothpaste, not swallow it.



Fluoride toothpaste, the size of a green pea

**Brush twice a day – In the morning and at bedtime.
Children need help brushing until about the age of 8.**

Outside



Angle brush, place half on teeth, half on gums, vibrate side to side

Inside



Brush the inside surfaces of the front and the back teeth

Chewing surfaces



Vibrate back and forth

Floss once a day – Children younger than 9 will need help.



Wrap floss around middle fingers (about ½ meter or 18 inches)



Gently guide floss between teeth



Move floss up and down, sliding under gum line, on both adjacent teeth

For more information, call your local Public Health office.