



“Help, My child won’t brush their teeth!”



Helpful hints encouraging children to brush their teeth.



Introduction

This booklet is full of ideas to motivate & encourage children to brush their teeth.

All children go through a stage (or stages!) when they don’t want to brush their teeth or adamantly refuse to brush their teeth. Its part of childhood development.

Read the booklet and find some ideas that you could try at home. Some will work and others will not. You will know your child best and can choose the ones you feel are most suitable.

If you create your own – please let us know and we can include them in the next booklet.

Remember, there are always times when children don’t want to brush their teeth. Try not to make it a big deal. It is important, but perhaps a little motivation and positive interaction is what is needed.

10 minutes of your time encouraging your child to brush beats 30 minutes fighting about it and becoming stressful for both of you.

Thank you.

IDEAS

Try a new toothbrush.

- Let the child choose their own when shopping.
- Swap to an electric toothbrush or manual toothbrush.



Try a new toothpaste.

- Squirt 3 blobs of toothpaste on the basin (traffic lights toothpaste) and encourage your child to try different toothpastes.
- Pretend to do a customer survey. Which toothpaste tastes the best? Which toothbrush is the softest/best to use etc.

Toothbrushing

- Use a leaflet or guidelines to show you/child how to brush your teeth properly
- Use a timer. (It should take 2 minutes to brush your teeth thoroughly.)
- Use a disclosing tablet. Its great fun if the whole family disclose their teeth at the same time!! (If you dare).
- Let your child brush your teeth! Often an adult can hurt their child's mouth when brushing vigorously, by letting your child brush yours you will see how it feels.
- Brush your teeth with a blindfold on.
- Choose a favourite song; brush your teeth until the music stops.
- Brush your teeth – as you would musical bumps. Every time the music stops change the place you are brushing. (You can adapt the rules to suit).
- Instruct your child to brush –
 - Brush the top right for 10 brushes.
 - Brush the bottom left for 6 brushes.....
- Use a mirror to help you see where you are brushing.
- Play copy cat – stand in front of each other and copy the way you brush your teeth. If they start at the top, so do you.....
- Encourage your child to pretend to brush their teddy or dollies teeth.



- Make a toothbrushing diary/chart. Ensure you brush your teeth twice a day, especially at night before you go to bed. (see reverse).
- Try brushing your teeth with different items – flannel, cloth etc to show how useful the toothbrush is at cleaning teeth.
- Tell a story whilst your child is brushing their teeth.
- Sing a song whilst your child is brushing their teeth. (this is the way we brush our teeth, brush our teeth.....)
- Try distraction games: Brush your teeth five times whilst standing on your left leg. Brush your teeth six times whilst standing on a stool.....
- Get someone else to sit with your child when they are brushing their teeth – what ideas do they know.
- Talk to other to see what they have done to stimulate their child to brush.
- Ask for help. Utilise the skills of your dentist, school nurse, health visitor etc. They have been asked many times to come up with ideas.
- Let younger children have their toothbrush whilst in the bath.
- Let them brush their own teeth and then you brush after (you can “polish” them).
- Let them have their own “Cleaning Kit” i.e. own toothbrush, toothpaste, soap etc.
- Use rewards – if you brush your teeth twice today, you can stay up an extra half hour or you can have a new pencil. (Use non sweet type rewards) If you brush your teeth morning and night all week, you can sleep in your sleeping bag/do some baking/go to the park.....(again use healthy alternatives to sweets).
- Always give lots of praise.
- Be positive.
- Make toothbrushing a routine task.

