

Oral Health

Presented by:

Katy Kerr

MSc BDS DDPH RCS (Eng.) PGCertClinEd

**Associate Postgraduate Dental Dean
Workforce**

Email: katy.kerr1@nhs.net

With grateful thanks to Victoria Niven and
Jeyanthi John for additional material

Aims of part one

- Setting the scene
- The impact of poor oral health
- Evidenced based key messages for prevention and oral health promotion in your setting
- Links to further resources



Are milk teeth important?

Yes, they are used for:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Speaking
- Holding space for adult teeth and developing face shape
- Smiling!



The last milk tooth doesn't fall out until about 12 years of age

healthy teeth ⇒ confident smile ⇒ self esteem

The problem



Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

19,381 children aged 5-9 years in England were admitted to hospital in 2023/24 for tooth decay

Children waiting more than two years for tooth extractions

<https://www.hsj.co.uk/quality-and-performance/children-waiting-more-than-two-years-for-tooth-extractions/7039213.article>

For the financial year 2020 to 2021 the estimated costs of hospital admissions in 0- to 19-year-olds for all tooth extractions was **£21.8 million** and for extractions due to tooth decay was £13.8 million.

Example

- Patient is a 4-year-old child
- Been bottle fed until age of 3
- Experienced pain, abscesses and had been prescribed 2 courses of antibiotics
- Referred by dentist to Community Dental Service for extraction of decayed teeth
- Examination found that all teeth were decayed
- Treatment plan agreed with parents was extraction under GA of all teeth (20)



Poor oral health is a sentinel marker for wider health and social care issues:

- Poor nutrition
- Obesity
- The need for parenting support
- In some instances, safeguarding and neglect



Poor dental health harms school readiness

Research about extractions in children found that **26% had missed school** because of dental pain

An average of **3 days of school** were missed due to dental problems

67% of parents reported that their child had been in **pain**

38% of children **had sleepless nights because of the pain**

Many days of work were potentially lost as **41%** of parents were employed

Why is oral health important?



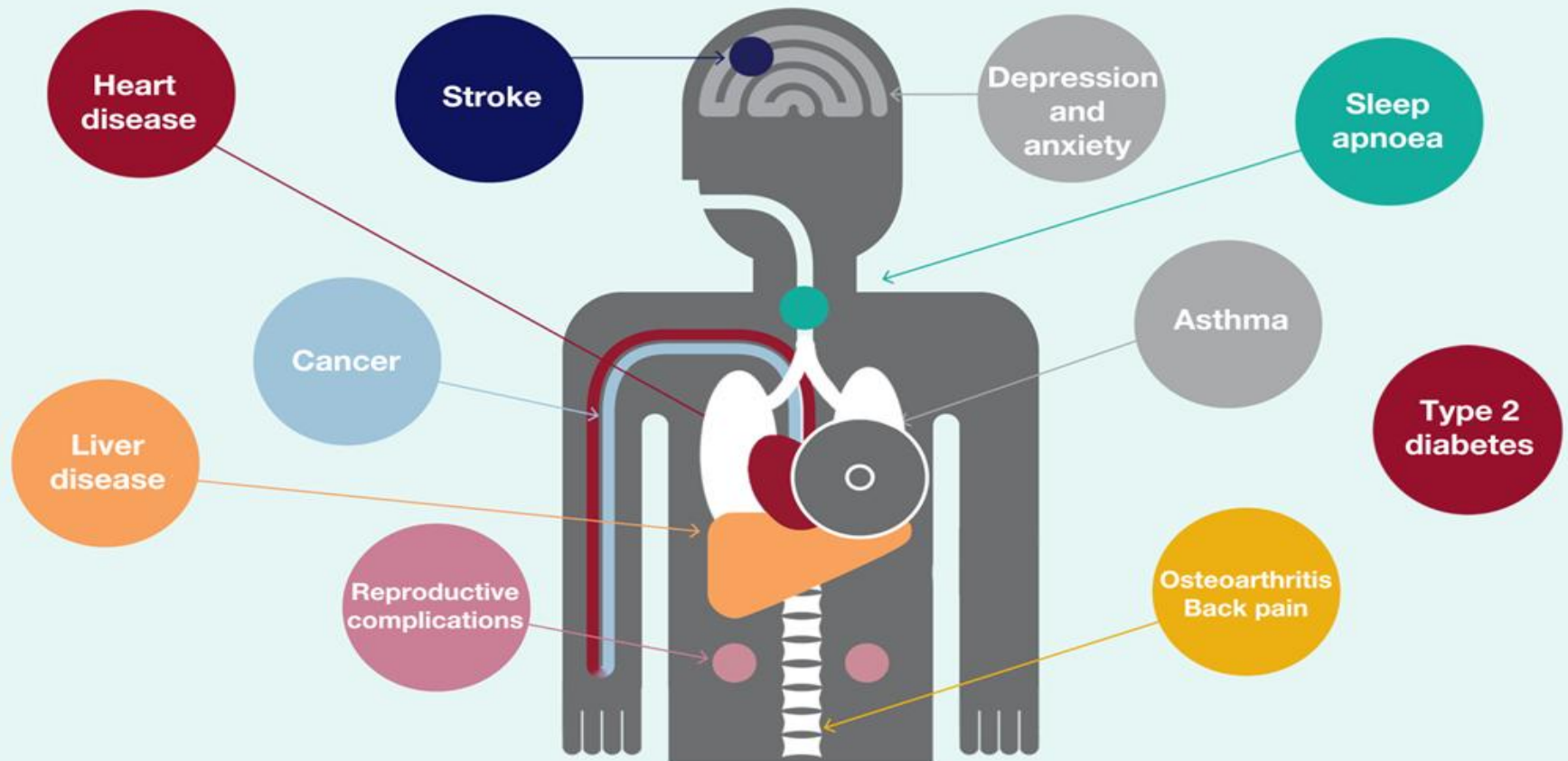
- Oral health affects quality of life
- Toothache and dental pain is very uncomfortable
- Oral disease can increase risk of other health issues and diseases

Poor Oral Health has been linked to...

- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Heart disease
- Lung disease
- Dementia
- Premature birth
- Low Birth Weight

High sugar diet contributing to obesity in childhood and ill health in the future

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2024/11/almost-one-in-ten-children-obese-in-first-year-of-school/>



- Almost one in ten children are obese in first year of school
- Obesity rates for those living in the most deprived areas (12.9%) were more than double those in the least deprived areas (6.0%).

The Early Years

Influence the way we live in adulthood



Children's early years influence their health, development, learning, attainment and career prospects



Eating habits during children's early years, influence growth, development and academic achievement later in life



Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities throughout life

Early intervention - more open to change

Early years staff are important partners in improving the oral health of children and young people



By building on existing knowledge and experience of staff working with children and young people to:

- Pass on knowledge to assist behaviour change.
- Encourage families to make healthy, 'tooth friendly' snack & drink choices.
- Facilitate good oral hygiene.

Promote dental visits

- Children should have first check up by the time they are 1 year old (ideally when get first tooth at 6 months old)
- Have a dental check-up at least once a year
- Free NHS dentistry for children and pregnant mothers (until their baby is 1 year old).

Could you put a display in your setting to promote this to parents?



Search for a local
NHS dentist by
visiting the website -
NHS choices and
select 'Find a
Dentist'

What should we do to keep our mouths healthy?

What works

- Using fluoride
- Good oral hygiene
- Reducing consumption of sugary foods and drinks
- Non-sugary drinks in suitable cups
- Sugar-free medicines

Other actions that can have a protective effect:

- Chewing sugar-free gum
- Using topical remineralizing agents rich in calcium and phosphate.



Fluoride

is a naturally occurring mineral

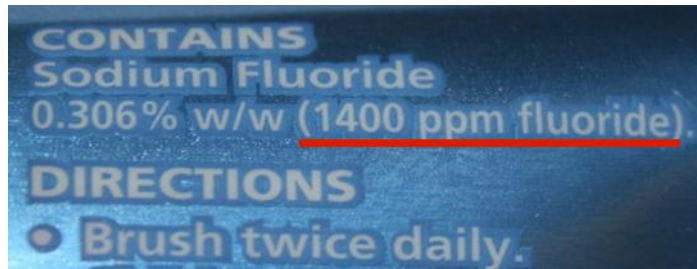
- Works topically and is most effective when used multiple times in a day.
- Higher concentrations of fluoride provide better prevention.
- Fluorides that are part of our normal daily life (such as toothpaste) are effective.

Is it safe? What about the health claims in the media?

- All major reviews of the evidence, found no evidence to support claims that it causes cancer, bone disease, kidney disease or birth defects
- **Negative media stories usually refer to studies where the concentration of fluoride is much higher than the recommended level**

All toothpastes must meet safety standards and they are rigorously tested

Toothpaste



- 0-3 years old use a **small smear** of toothpaste with 1350–1500 parts per million (ppm) of fluoride (family toothpaste)
- 3 years and above use a **small pea sized** amount of 1350–1500 ppm of fluoride toothpaste

Fluoride is fantastic for your teeth but do not allow a child to eat toothpaste from the tube



Brushing children's teeth

Toothbrushing:

1 - Removes Plaque

2 - Applies Fluoride

- Parents should start brushing as soon as the first tooth appears
- Children need help with brushing until they are about 7 years old
- Use a toothbrush with a small head and medium texture bristles is recommended.
- Brush twice a day for about 2 minutes
- The brush before bedtime is the most important
- **Spit out excess paste but don't rinse out after brushing**



Toothbrushing

No brushing method is better, modify the existing method to improve

- Try to start in the same part of the mouth each time, and clean every tooth
- Angle the toothbrush towards the gums & include the gum margin
- Clean outside, inside and biting surfaces of the teeth



Tooth decay is preventable but it's not just about cleaning teeth

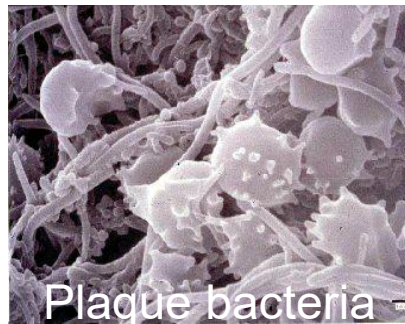
Also need a tooth friendly approach to food and drink



How does dental decay happen?



+

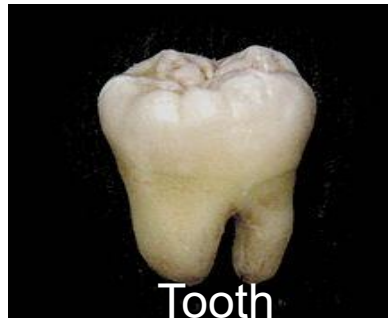


=

ACID

ACID

+



=

Tooth decay

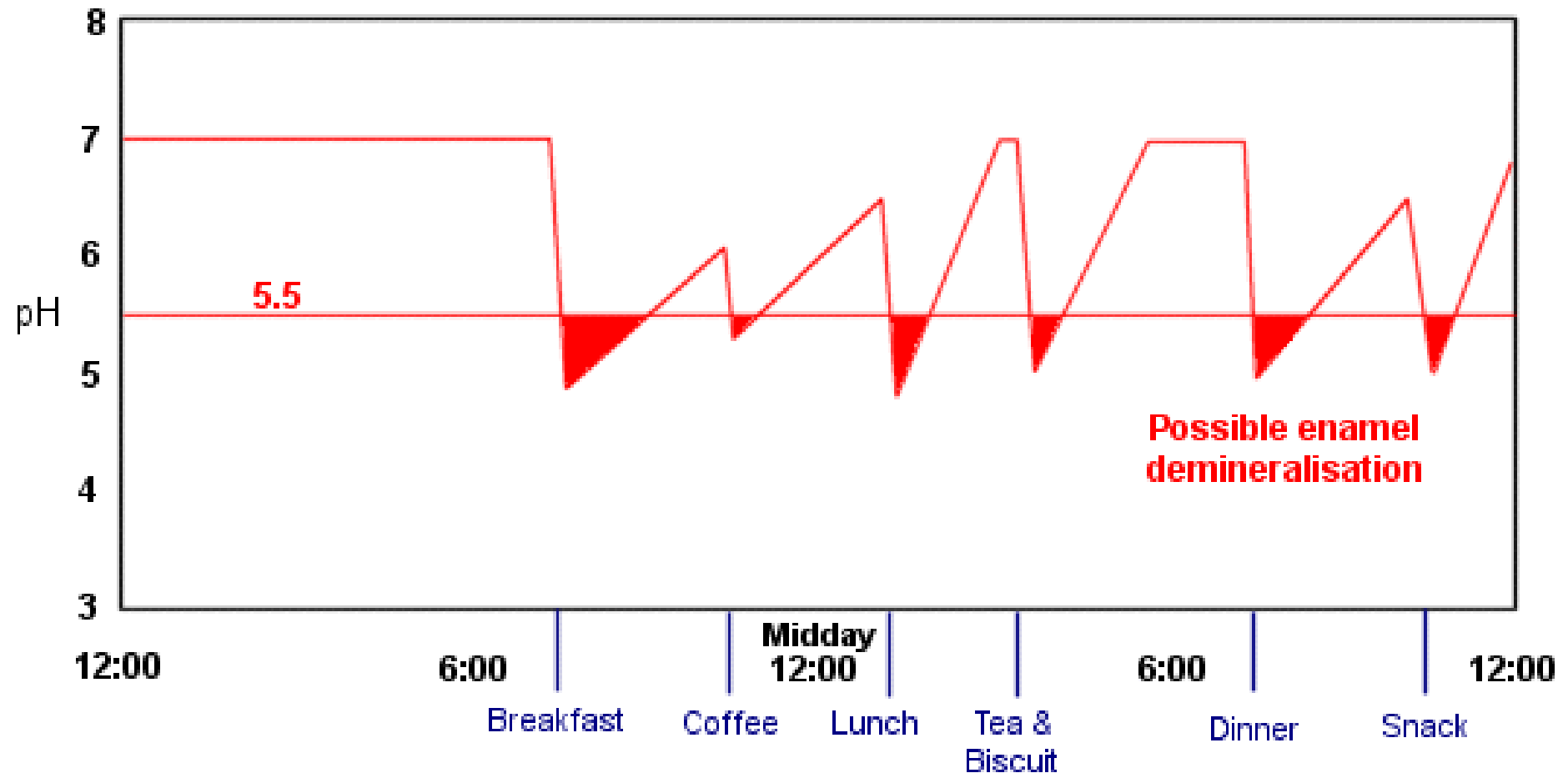


How much sugar should we have?



This is for added sugar it does not include sugars naturally found in intact fruit and veg and in milk or milk products

Frequency of acid attacks through the day

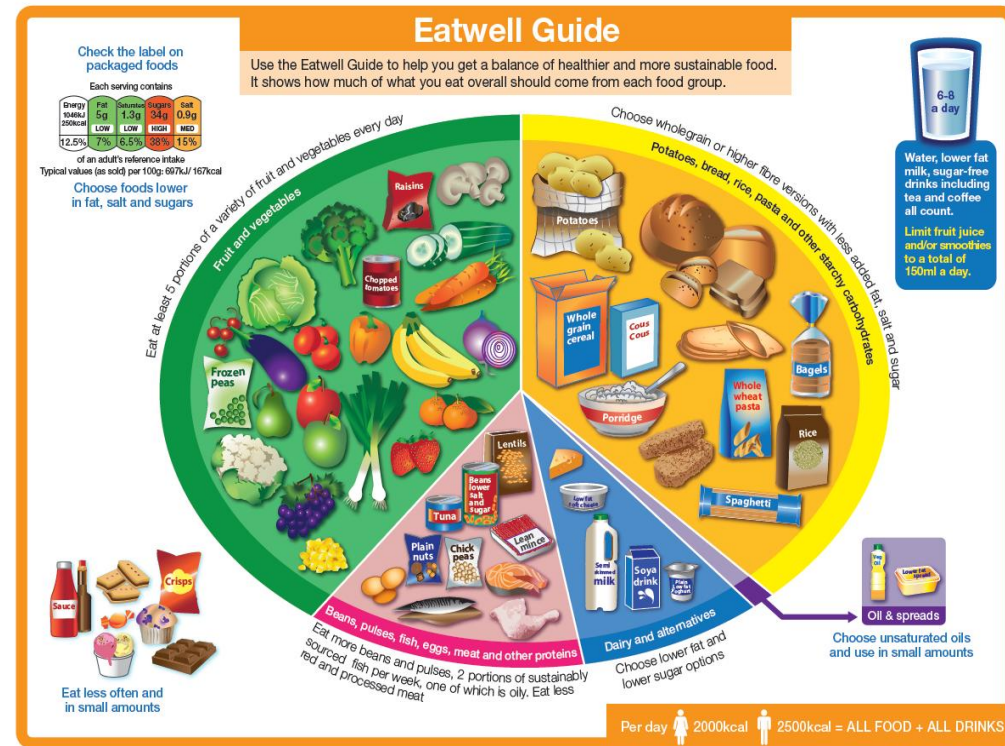


The Eatwell Guide

- Shows the proportions of foods needed for a healthy diet
- Represents food eaten over a day or more, not necessarily at each mealtime
- Aim to have a variety of different foods from each food group

Children under two years have different nutritional needs.

Children aged two to five years should gradually move to eating the same foods as the rest of their family, in the proportions shown on the **Eatwell Guide**.



Foods high in fat, salt and sugars

- This includes products such as chocolate, cakes, biscuits, sugary soft drinks, butter and ice-cream
- These foods are not needed in the diet and are energy-dense so should be eaten sparingly
- Can lead to:
 - Weight gain
 - Tooth decay
 - Heart disease and stroke
 - Poor diabetes control
- Reduce consumption in small steps to make the transition easier.
- Even small changes can have positive effects on health

Should food be used as treats and rewards?



What about non-sugar sweeteners?

The World Health Organization (WHO) released a guideline (May 2023) on (NSS), **which recommends against the use of non-sugar sweeteners (NSS) to control body weight**



- NSS are not essential dietary factors and have no nutritional value.
- People should reduce the sweetness of the diet altogether, starting early in life, to improve their health
- The recommendation applies to all people except individuals with pre-existing diabetes

Common NSS include acesulfame K, aspartame, advantame, cyclamates, neotame, saccharin, sucralose, stevia and stevia derivatives.

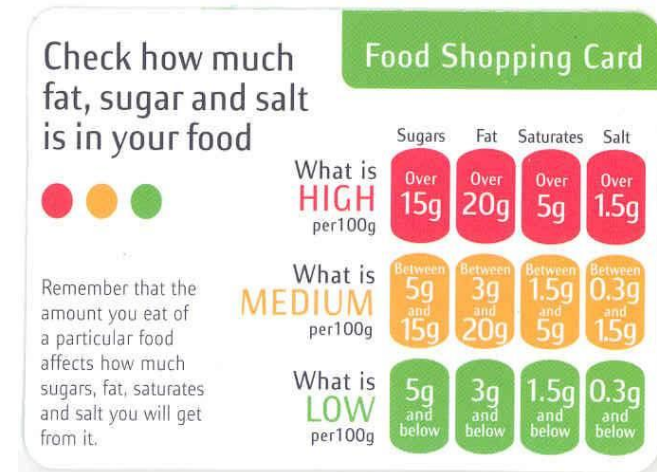
Dietary advice

* Based on over 10 + years of age (FSA,2007)

If currently consuming foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar try to have these less often and in smaller amounts

- Reduction of consumption of sugars
- Minimize the amount and frequency of consumption of foods and drinks that contain free sugars
- Free sugars-containing foods and drinks should be avoided at bedtime and preferably eaten at mealtimes
- Most sugars in the diet come from processed and manufactured foods and drinks
- Types of sugar

Portion sizes used on the label are suggestions and may not be the same as actually consumed



Food swaps

Brand 1	
Typical values	Per 100g
Energy	355kJ 84kcal
Protein	5.2g
Carbohydrate	15.3g
Of which sugar	5.9g
Fat	0.6g
Of which saturated	0.1g
Fibre	3.7g
Salt	1.3g



Brand 2 (Reduced salt/sugar)	
Typical values	Per 100g
Energy	311kJ 73kcal
Protein	5.4g
Carbohydrate	12.5g
Of which sugar	2.8g
Fat	0.6g
Of which saturated	0.1g
Fibre	3.8g
Salt	0.8g

Healthy snacks between meals

- Fresh fruit/ vegetables
- Savoury bread
- Cheese
- Plain yoghurt with fresh fruit
- Crackers
- Milk

Drinks

- Whole cows milk from 1 year, move to semi- skimmed milk at 2 if child eats well, and skimmed milk over 5 years old
- Tea and coffee contain tannin (limits iron absorption) and caffeine (stimulant)
- Offer 6-8 drinks per day from an open cup and only water during the night
- Juices and drinks constituted from fruit concentrates should be avoided, if used they should be well diluted and only given at mealtimes
- Fizzy drinks can contain high quantities of sugar and are acidic

Milk and water only safe drinks for teeth



Fruit juice & Fruit squash

- May contain a large amount of calories
- Primes children to like sweet drinks
- Children expect all drinks to be sweet
- Affects appetite
- May cause some children to put on weight
- Harmful to teeth even if it is sugar free



Water will quench their thirst but not affect their appetite

Some thoughts about the Eatwell Guide

- **Only 0.1% of the UK population** meeting all nine recommendations provided by the Eatwell Guide.
- Research has found that individuals **with a moderate to high adherence** to the Eatwell Guide recommendations have a **30% lower dietary carbon footprint** and a **7% reduced total mortality risk**, compared with those with very low adherence.
- Improving adherence is of upmost importance not only to improve the health and reduce rates of non-communicable disease in the UK but also to support reduction in the environmental impact of what we are eating.

Adaptations have been made of the UK Eatwell Guide including the [Vegan Eatwell Guide](#), [Plant-Based Eatwell Guide](#), [South Asian Eatwell Guide](#) and the [African and Caribbean Eatwell Guide](#). Thus highlighting the need for culturally, socially and ethically adapted versions, where current guidelines are not meeting the need.

Respecting faith/ values

Vegan Toothpastes

Cruelty-free vegan fluoride toothpastes are available in the UK, offering good protection against tooth decay.

- Please ensure product has correct level of fluoride
- The following brands have toothpastes in their list that comply:
 - Coop, Superdrug and Tesco own brand toothpastes
 - Ecodenta, Humble Natural Toothpaste, Ordo, Kingfisher (with fluoride), Waken, Wisdom

<https://vegandentist.uk/vegan-toothpaste>

Better Health Start for Life Top Tips For Teeth

The Top Tips for Teeth resources are designed for dental professionals, **early years professionals** and those working with families and young children to encourage parents and carers to teach children good oral health.

<https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/ttft/>

<https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/school-zone/healthy-eating/>



There are various printed and digital materials available to help spread these messages, including online tools and websites.

NHS website- Take care of your teeth and gums

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/take-care-of-your-teeth-and-gums/>

Better Health Start for Life Top Tips For Teeth

The Top Tips for Teeth resources are designed for dental professionals, **early years professionals** and those working with families and young children to encourage parents and carers to teach children good oral health.

<https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/ttft/>

<https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/school-zone/healthy-eating/>



There are various printed and digital materials available to help spread these messages, including online tools and websites.

NHS website- Take care of your teeth and gums

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/take-care-of-your-teeth-and-gums/>

any questions?

Thank You



@nhsengland

company/nhsengland



england.nhs.uk

