

# Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles



## Brushing Your Child's Teeth

**B**rushing is one of the main ways you can keep your child's teeth healthy. You should brush your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice each day to help prevent tooth decay (cavities). Begin brushing as soon as your child's first tooth begins to show.



*School readiness begins with health!*



## Tips for brushing your child's teeth:

- Brush your child's teeth after breakfast and before bed.
- Use a child-sized toothbrush with soft bristles and fluoride toothpaste.
  - For children under age 3, use a small smear of fluoride toothpaste.
  - For children ages 3 to 6, use fluoride toothpaste the size of a pea.
- Young children like to do things by themselves. It's good to let children brush their teeth while an adult watches. But children under age 7 or 8 cannot brush their teeth well yet. An adult needs to brush the child's teeth too.
- Find a position where your child is comfortable and you can see your child's

teeth while you brush. For example, sit on the floor with your baby's or young child's head in your lap. Or stand behind your child in front of the mirror.

- Gently brush your child's teeth using small circles. Brush all surfaces of the teeth, including the insides and outsides.
- After brushing, have your child spit out the remaining toothpaste but not rinse. The small amount of toothpaste that stays in your child's mouth is good for the teeth.
- If you are having trouble brushing your child's teeth, use a timer, a counting game, or a song while brushing. You can also ask the staff at your child's dental clinic for help.



*Use a smear for children under age 3.*



*Use a pea-size amount for children ages 3 to 6.*

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