

# CAVITY FREE AT THREE

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## How to Brush

- ▶ Starting at birth, clean your baby's gums with a soft infant toothbrush or a cloth and water.
- ▶ As soon as teeth start to appear, start brushing twice a day with a small amount of fluoridated toothpaste and a soft toothbrush.
- ▶ For children under 3, use just a smear of toothpaste; for children 3-6, use a pea-sized amount.
- ▶ Brush twice a day-after breakfast and before bedtime. If you can, brush after eating lunch or sweet snacks, too.
- ▶ Use fluoride toothpaste. A lower-fluoride toothpaste can be used for kids under 6 years old.
- ▶ Gently brush the inner surface of the teeth, moving back and forth with short, circular motions. Then move to the outer surface and then the chewing surface on top. Pay special attention to where the tooth meets the gum as this is where plaque builds up.
- ▶ Use the tip of the brush to clean behind each front tooth on the bottom and the top.
- ▶ Don't be too rough-it doesn't take a lot of pressure to remove bacteria. Too much pressure can hurt the gums.
- ▶ Encourage your child to spit out toothpaste after brushing but don't rinse. If your child is too young to spit, wipe the toothpaste off their teeth with a washcloth or a piece of gauze. Try to avoid having your child swallow the toothpaste.
- ▶ Spend two or three minutes brushing. Keep track of time by singing a song or setting an egg timer.
- ▶ Even if they know how to brush, young children aren't able to brush their own teeth effectively-children need to be supervised with tooth brushing until age 7. Help make brushing something your children look forward to by using music or a game to keep track of how long they need to brush.

Sources: The American Academic of Pediatric Dentistry, Australian Dental Association