

strong
teeth
strong
body
strong
mind

a Teaching Guide

Benefits of healthy teeth



Healthy baby teeth

- Children won't suffer pain from decay and infection so are able to concentrate better at school.
- Children are less likely to suffer illness linked to oral infections so attendance rates will be more stable.
- Children are able to eat a wide range of healthy foods.

Indigenous oral health

Indigenous children appear to experience worse oral health than non Indigenous children, The Kimberley Dental team has found that up to 75% of primary school children in remote East Kimberley Aboriginal communities have widespread decay requiring treatment urgently or within 6 months. This is similar to the rates reported by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Tooth decay

Bacteria in the mouth join with the sugars in food and drinks to make acids that can eat into teeth causing decay.

Decay in teeth (cavities) does not get better on its own and can lead to infection and pain. The dentist or therapist can repair small cavities by removing decay and placing a filling but if the cavity is very large or there is too much infection the tooth will need to be extracted.

Young children with extensive decay can be difficult to treat and often need a general anaesthetic.



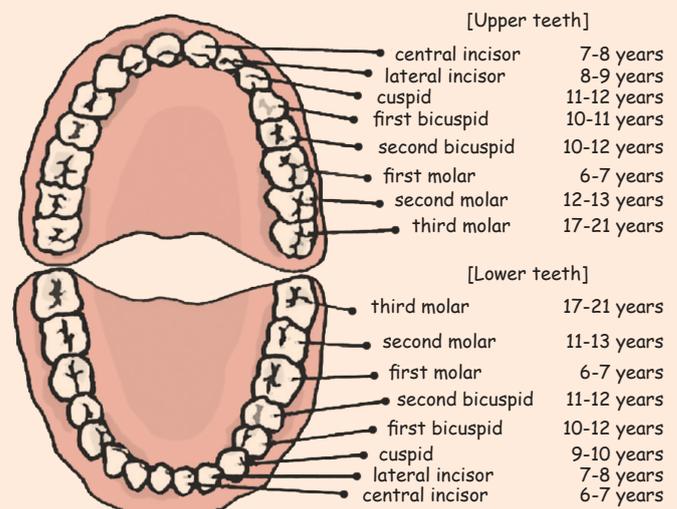
Decay in baby teeth

Gum disease

As well as causing decay, bacteria can make the gums inflamed, with redness and bleeding. Daily gentle brushing can help make gums strong and healthy again.

Strong teeth for kids

- Baby teeth start to become loose and fall out when children are about 6 years old.
- Baby teeth continue to fall out for a few years and permanent teeth gradually appear between the ages of 7 and 13.
- Permanent teeth need to last for a person's whole life, so it is important to keep teeth clean and gums healthy.
- Infections in baby teeth can affect permanent teeth before they appear so it is important to look after baby teeth too.



The Kimberley Dental Team can provide toothbrushes for every child in your class/school.

Tooth brushing at school

- Regular tooth brushing can improve oral health and reduce tooth decay
- It is best if children are able to brush their teeth twice a day at home but, if this isn't possible, brushing teeth once a day at school is a good option.

Cleaning teeth

- Set aside a time each day for cleaning teeth – when children arrive at school or after lunch are good times.
- Provide somewhere to spit out excess toothpaste.
- Put out pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. If you run out of toothpaste just use brushes and water until you can access more.
- Effective brushing should take 2-3 minutes.
- Remind children to brush both the inside, the outside and the top of every tooth and to brush the gums gently – gums might bleed a little at first but with regular brushing this should stop.
- Toothpaste should be spat out – not swallowed or rinsed off.

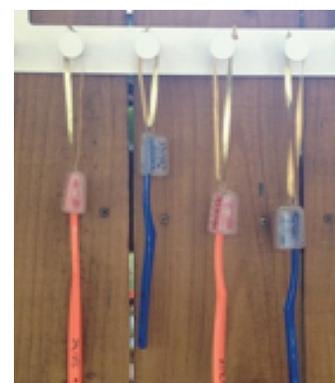


Storing toothbrushes

Each child should have their own toothbrush with their name on it.

Store them somewhere so they don't touch each other (spreads germs).

At the end of term, send toothbrushes home with children and give them a new one at the beginning of the next term.



Good tucker

Growing kids need healthy food and drinks to grow strong bones and teeth and a strong heart, body and mind.



School-based oral health education

Talk to children about:

- how important their teeth are
- how cavities form in teeth
- how to look after teeth with good tucker and daily brushing.

Make tooth brushing fun and regular.

Encourage parents to access checkups and treatment when the dentist or dental therapist is in your community. Especially for children with known dental disease.



To access stock of toothbrushes and toothpaste, contact the Kimberley Dental Team, Kimberley Population Health Unit or Dental Health Services (DHS: 08 9313 0604/5).

Educational material: www.dental.wa.gov.au

Contact: www.kimberleydentalteam.com ■ Jan Owen 0407 998 215 ■ KPHU 08 9192 9767