



**Te Whatu Ora**  
Health New Zealand

## How to look after a baby's teeth



This is the Easy Read booklet of the leaflet **5 Tips to keep your baby's teeth healthy (0-6 months)**.

Bee Healthy Regional Dental Service

Easy Read

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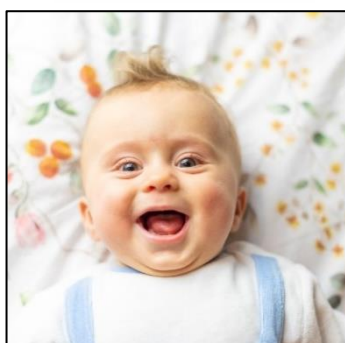
## What is this booklet about?

This booklet is about how to look after a baby's teeth.

It is for people who:



- will have a baby soon
- have a baby that is less than 6 months old
- look after a baby.



The information is about babies who are less than 6 months old.



There are more booklets about how to look after teeth for:

- older babies and children
- teenagers who go to high school
- people who have a baby growing inside them.

There is also a booklet about some of the hard words that dentists may use.

You can find the booklets on the Bee Healthy website.



Go to this website link to find them:

<https://www.beehealthy.org.nz/resources>

Scroll down the page and look for things that say **Easy Read**.

## Why do I need to look after my baby's teeth?



When a baby is born they have no teeth you can see.

A baby's teeth are inside their gums so you cannot see them yet.

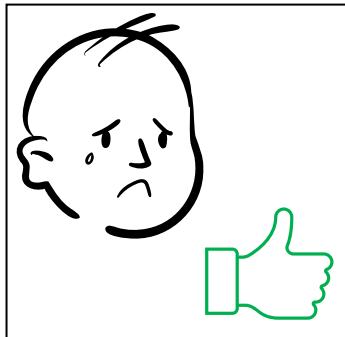


But their teeth will grow and poke through their gums.

This starts when the baby is about 4 or 5 months old.

Normally only 1 or 2 teeth poke through at a time.

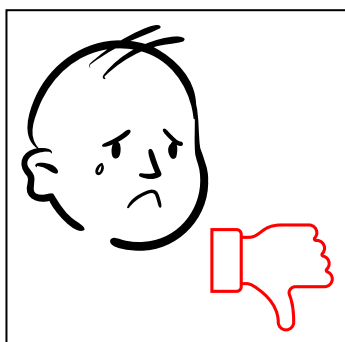
When a new tooth pokes through that is called **teething**.



Teething gives a baby sore gums.

They will cry because it is sore.

Teething is normal for a baby.



But if you do not look after their teeth they can get teeth problems.

Their teeth and gums will get sore in a way that is not normal.

Your child will not keep the teeth they have as a baby.



These teeth are called **baby teeth**.



As your child gets older their baby teeth will fall out.

This is normal.

They will grow more teeth that they will keep as an adult.

But you still need to look after the baby teeth in their mouth.

Baby teeth will help your baby to:

- eat their food well
- learn to speak
- have space for their adult teeth.

There are things you can do to help your baby's teeth.



# Things that help a baby's teeth

## Brush their teeth 2 times every day

If you cannot see any teeth in your baby's mouth you do not need to brush.



You need to start brushing when you see a tooth poke through the gum.

Be soft with their teeth and gums.

To clean their teeth you can use a:

- soft cloth

**or**

- small toothbrush for babies that is soft.







It is best to use toothpaste that is made for adults.

Toothpaste for adults has good things in it that help to make teeth strong.

You need to use toothpaste that has **fluoride** in it.



The toothpaste tube or box will tell you if it has fluoride in it.

Babies only need a little toothpaste.



Just smear a tiny bit of toothpaste on the brush or cloth.

It is like when you spread a little butter on toast.

You need to brush your baby's teeth:



- for 2 minutes **in the morning**

and



- for 2 minutes **at night** before they go to bed.

## Do not wash their mouth after brushing



When you brush a baby's teeth there may be some toothpaste foam.

If there is a lot of foam they need to spit it out.



Some people wash their mouth out after they brush their teeth.



A different name for this is **rinse their mouth**.

Rinse their mouth means to use some water to get rid of the foam inside their mouth.



It is better if you do not wash your baby's mouth out with water after you brush their teeth.

This is because the fluoride will stay in their mouth.

It will help their teeth to be strong.

If you rinse their mouth with water the fluoride will go away.

## Drink tap water and milk

When a baby is little they get what their body needs from milk.



The milk could be:

- breast milk from their mum
- the milk powder for babies you can buy called **formula**.

A baby should only drink milk from their mum or formula.

They should not have other drinks like:



- fruit juice
- fizzy drinks
- chocolate milk.



There is too much sugar in other drinks.

Sugar can make holes in their teeth.



Some people give a baby a bottle of milk when they go to sleep.

**Do not do this.**

Remember to clean your baby's teeth at night before they go to sleep.



Also **do not** put honey or sugar on their pacifier (dummy).

## Do not give your baby foods with sugar



When your baby is born they will only drink milk or formula.



But when they are old enough they will start to eat food too.



Food that has a lot of sugar in it is not good for your baby's teeth.



Sugar can make teeth less strong.

When teeth are less strong it is easy for them to get sore.





Some foods have a lot of sugar in them.

**Do not** give these to your baby when they are very young.



Most of the time you need to give them food that has:

- no sugar **or**
- only a little sugar.



When you feed your baby with a spoon **do not** put their spoon in your mouth too.

## Go to a dentist for free



A **dentist** is like a doctor for your teeth and gums.

You can take your baby to the dentist if you want:

- to check if their teeth and gums are okay
- the dentist to help with their sore teeth or gums.



**Your child can go to the dentist for free until they turn 18 years old.**

## How can I find a free dentist?



Bee Healthy is the name of the dental service in:

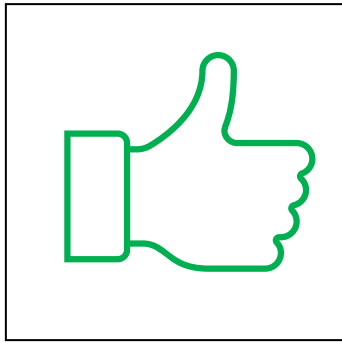
- Wellington
- Porirua
- Hutt Valley

and

- Kāpiti Coast.

Bee Healthy helps you look after your child's teeth.

It means they can get free help from a dentist until they are 18 years old.



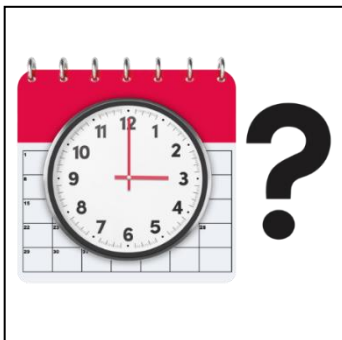
Bee Healthy knows your baby can see a free dentist if they were born in:

- Wellington
- Porirua
- Hutt Valley
- Kāpiti Coast.



If your baby was not born in those places you need to call Bee Healthy.

Bee Healthy will ask you things about your baby so they are put on the list for free help from a dentist.



You can also call them to book a day and time for your baby to have a check-up.

## When do I need to take my baby to the dentist?



When your baby is 2 years old they need their first dentist check-up.



Then they need a check-up 1 time every year after that.



At a check-up a dentist may do things like:

- look at their teeth and gums for problems they can see
- take an x-ray picture to check their teeth are healthy inside
- talk to you about things you can do that are good for your baby's teeth.



## Learn more about looking after teeth



You can go to the website [www.beehealthy.org.nz](http://www.beehealthy.org.nz) if you want to learn more about:

- how to look after your baby's teeth and gums
- where you can find a free dentist for them in the Wellington region.



You can also call Bee Healthy to ask questions.

Call them on the phone number  
**0800 825 583.**

## Where do the pictures in this booklet come from?



Some of the pictures in this booklet came from [www.photosymbols.com](http://www.photosymbols.com).

Some of the pictures came from people who put their own photos online.

They have said other people can use their photos too.

But the law says we have to say where we got the photos from.

People say that pictures like this are called **creative commons images**.





On this page you can see the creative commons images we used in this booklet.

