Which toothpaste should you use?

The Ministry of Health recommends everyone use a fluoride toothpaste containing **at least 1000 parts per million (ppm) fluoride** to help prevent tooth decay.

- Children can often use the same fluoride toothpaste as adults so long as they use the correct amount for their age. For 0 - 5 year olds use a half-pea sized amount of toothpaste, or less if they only have a few teeth, for everyone else, a pea-sized amount is sufficient.
- The fluoride in toothpaste helps to prevent tooth decay by strengthening tooth enamel, helping to repair the early stages of tooth decay and disrupting the growth of bacteria that causes cavities.

Here are examples of toothpastes that contain enough fluoride to help keep your child’s teeth healthy:

These toothpastes **DO NOT** meet the Ministry of Health guidelines

These toothpastes contain little or no fluoride and are not as effective at helping to prevent tooth decay as toothpaste containing at least 1000ppm fluoride.

*1000ppm fluoride is equal to 0.22% sodium fluoride or 0.76% sodium monofluorophosphate*
How much toothpaste should you use?

**Babies**
When baby teeth first start to appear, use a soft cloth, finger brush or baby toothbrush with a rice grain-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.

**Children 0 - 5 years old**
Use a small, soft toothbrush with a half-pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste, or less if they only have a few teeth.

**Children 6 years old & over**
Use a soft toothbrush with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.

- **Use fluoride toothpaste containing at least 1000ppm fluoride.**
- Help your child put the correct amount of fluoride toothpaste on their toothbrush and assist them to brush their teeth for two minutes, twice a day (in the morning and at night just before bed). They will need your help with brushing until they are about 8 years old.
- Encourage your child to spit, and not rinse after brushing so the fluoride can keep working to protect and strengthen their teeth.