



Euroopan unionin
osarahoittama

Oral care for a baby aged 6-12 months

6-12 kuukauden ikäisen vauvan suun hoito



Baby's mouth and teeth care at 6–12 months of age

A child does not inherit bad teeth. There are many ways to protect your child's future teeth from cavities.



The first teeth are called baby teeth. Baby teeth are more prone to cavities than permanent teeth. Baby teeth are in the mouth for a long time. The last baby teeth can be in the mouth even until adolescence.

Tooth decay is caused by bacteria. Bacterial infection is transmitted through saliva. You can avoid the transmission of the bacterium by avoiding saliva contact with the child. Saliva contact is avoided by ensuring that the child's pacifier, toys or cutlery do not go into the adult's mouth. It is recommended to kiss the baby on the cheeks and other parts of the face, not directly on the mouth.



A bacteria only cause cavities in the teeth when you eat a lot and frequently sugary foods, and when the teeth are dirty.

Breastfeeding and bottle feeding

At first, the child's nutrition is breast milk or infant formula. Breastfeeding or bottle feeding is done according to the child's own rhythm.



The baby is only offered milk or water from the baby bottle.
Sweetened drinks served from a baby bottle cause severe decay of baby teeth.

At the age of 6–12 months, the baby needs other nutrition in addition to breast milk or infant formula. It is important to start tasting solid foods at the age of 6 months at the latest. You can get more detailed instructions from a public health nurse during child health clinic visits.



Breastfeeding is good for the growth of the child's jaw. You can get support for breastfeeding from the child health clinic if you have challenges with breastfeeding.



Caring for your baby's mouth by brushing their teeth

A good foundation for oral self-care habits is created already in early childhood. Start brushing your child's teeth as soon as the first tooth erupts. Brush baby's teeth in the morning and evening. Choose a small, soft brush. Use a fluoride toothpaste intended for children. Fluoride strengthens teeth and protects teeth from decay.



Use only a small smear of toothpaste, about the size of a grain of rice. Choose a children's fluoride toothpaste from the store, which has an age recommendation for 0–5-year-olds. The fluoride content should be between 1000 and 1100 ppm. You can buy toothbrushes and toothpaste at grocery stores.



The responsibility for brushing a child's teeth lies with an adult. An adult must brush the child's teeth until the age of 12. The toothbrush must be replaced with a new toothbrush at least every three months. If the bristles are worn or turned to the sides, replace the brush with a new one earlier. A toothbrush is personal.



Using pacifier

If your child needs a pacifier, choose an anatomically shaped pacifier. A properly shaped pacifier does not compromise the normal development of the bite. Choose a pacifier according to the age recommendation.



A pacifier should only be offered to calm down and help baby to fall asleep. Wean your child off the use of a pacifier at the age of 1.5–2 years at the latest. The easiest age to stop using a pacifier can be around 6–8 months of age. Make sure that the child does not start sucking their thumb instead of the pacifier. You can get help and support for weaning from the dental and child health clinic.

Clean the pacifier daily and replace it regularly. **Always check the pacifier before giving it to the baby. Check the pacifier by stretching the nipple part. If there is a hole in it, stop using the pacifier immediately.**



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Niitty 2 -project 2023-2026

Working together with immigrant
families for a better everyday life

More information about the project:
<https://projects.tuni.fi/niitty2/>

Family Info material portal:
tuni.fi/perheinfo

This guidance sheet is mainly based on the following sources of
information :

Caries (control). Current Care Guidelines. A working group appointed by
the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim and the Finnish Dental Society
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Illustration: Adobe Stock on page 2,3 and 4.
Drawing by students of Luovi Vocational College page 4.
Other photos produced in the Niitty2 project.



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