

Healthy Bites episode - Helping children with oral health

Hi, my name is Sharika-Marrie, and I am an Oral Health Therapist at Central Coast Health. Are you a grandparent or carer that helps a child with their oral health? Here's a few tips that might help.

Remember, good oral health habits start early, including making the dental environment a fun and safe space.

You have most likely heard someone say, "They're just baby teeth." But baby teeth are important! They help children eat, grow, help the shape of the jaw and maintain space for the adult teeth.

Unfortunately, tooth decay is one of the most common childhood diseases, but it is preventable. Children should have their teeth checked by their first birthday or when their first tooth appears, which is usually around six months of age.

Start brushing teeth when the first tooth arrives using a small soft toothbrush and water. No toothpaste is needed until around 18 months of age when fluoride toothpaste is recommended. Try to help with tooth brushing until eight years of age.

Keep a child engaged in brushing by using a timer, a short song, or counting as a game to encourage brushing for two minutes.

Encourage tooth-friendly snacks such as eggs, nuts, yogurt, cheese or popcorn and choose water as a drink. And try to set a good oral health example yourself, as role modelling is important.

Did you know that all children under eighteen can access public oral health in NSW as well as adults who have a Medicare card, and a concession or healthcare card? Call us on 1800 679 336 for more information.