

In the last edition of the Totally Locally Times I talked about starting babies and toddlers with good dental habits to ensure a healthy smile for life.

As children start school it's a good time to ensure routines are established to keep those young mouths happy and smiling. School mornings can be busy but don't rush the brush! Continue to supervise brushing for 2 minutes twice a day, every single day. Keep to a mild toothpaste, for example Aquafresh Little Teeth, until your child is ready to move onto a stronger flavour – toothpaste for older children or adults can taste "spicy" to little ones and it's important to spit and not rinse after brushing to get the protective benefit from the fluoride.

Key stage 1 is the time most children will get their first wobbly tooth and a visit from the Tooth Fairy. Exciting times but it can be uncomfortable and difficult for children to brush effectively. Disclosing tablets are a great way to show up any areas of plaque missed with the brush – bright pink or purple! Don't worry, it all can be brushed away!

Keeping sweets and treats to meal times can be difficult what with after school activities, play dates, birthday parties etc. Try and have to hand easy tooth-safe snacks for hungry children after school – bread roll, Babybel, plain popcorn, fruit or carrot sticks etc and pop the treats into a sweetie jar for later. Dried fruit and crisps are not safe snacks for teeth so are best kept for their lunchbox. Water is the best and safest drink for teeth – try and insist this is the only drink available between mealtimes.

Dental health checks by your dentist are really important at this early age to check the growing teeth and developing jaws. Regular visits help to ensure good brushing and the right advice for your child at their age and stage.

Next time: What to do if an adult tooth is broken or knocked out : First Aid advice for teeth.

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