

Toothbrushing Policy

As a part of our holistic vision of care at Green Roots, we encourage daily brushing for the children who have breakfast with us. Research shows that good oral hygiene practice should be established from an early age in a child's life and become an integral part of their daily routine. Regular daily brushing with an appropriate fluoride toothpaste is highly effective in preventing dental decay, the majority of which goes untreated in children under 6 (Public Health England, 2017). We endeavour to help support our children develop good oral hygiene habits and encourage dry brushing from the emergence of a child's first tooth.

Dry Brushing

Dry brushing is the most hygienic and effective way for children to clean their teeth. It involves no cross contamination of tube to brush, and the children do not 'spit' into the sink. The procedure we follow for dry brushing is as follows:

- A pea-sized amount (over 3's) or smear (under 3's) of toothpaste will be dispensed onto a clean dry paper towel and a practitioner will help the child to scoop this onto their brush.
- The child will place their toothbrush against their teeth tilting the bristle tips to a 45-degree angle against the gum line. They will be encouraged to move the brush in small circular movements, several times, on all the surfaces of every tooth.
- Firstly, they will brush the outer surfaces of each tooth, upper and lower, keeping the bristles angled against the gum line.
- Then, they will clean the inside surfaces of the front teeth, by tilting the brush vertically and making several small circular strokes with the front part of the brush.
- They will then be encouraged to spit out after brushing onto their paper towel. When finished, they will not rise with water. This allows the fluoride to stay on the teeth longer and provides maximum protection.
- Children will be monitored at all times to make sure that toothpaste is not swallowed.

Storage

Toothbrushes are a potential source of infection and cross-contamination. Therefore, children's brushes will be rinsed with warm water to loosen the toothpaste, dried with a clean paper towel, and put back into the child's own suitable storage before being returned to the child's bag. We will not encourage the child to brush their teeth if their toothbrush has not had a cap on it or has not been kept in suitable storage. (N.B. suitable storage is that which allows air to get to the brush. For example a cap rather than a sandwich/freezer bag)

Exceptions

- Children with a medical diagnosis of infection or ulcerations in mouth should not participate in supervised toothbrushing until problem has resolved

- The brush has not been stored hygienically and using the brush could cause the child to become unwell
- These children should continue to brush their teeth at least twice per day at home.