

# Brush, Book, Bed!

Protecting your baby's teeth starts before they have them.

## Brush

You can protect teeth from tooth decay before they appear by giving your baby healthy foods to eat such as vegetables or fruit.

Start regular brushing when teeth show using a baby toothbrush with a smear of fluoride toothpaste.

Did you know it is ok to use adult strength toothpaste for your baby?

## Book

Singing rhymes or sharing stories will help settle your baby and develop their language and listening skills.

A calming bedtime story is a lovely way to spend a few minutes cuddled up together at the end of each day.

## Bed

Sleep is important and it's good if babies can settle themselves. Babies gradually learn how to do this and using a simple bedtime routine will help.

Gentle reassurance will soothe and make your baby feel safe to sleep.

You can borrow books for babies and children free from your local library. For more information visit [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/libraries)

## Looking After Your Baby's Teeth

When your baby is ready to start weaning introduce a wide range of flavours and textures. Babies don't need salt or sugar added to their food. Sugary foods cause tooth decay.

Protecting your baby's teeth starts before they have them. Never offer anything but milk or water in a bottle, introduce a free-flowing cup from 6 months and don't dip dummies in anything sweet or sugary.

### When To Start

A sign of teething is when babies start chewing on their fingers. You can give them healthy things to chew on, such as raw fruit and vegetables.

When your little one's teeth appear start brushing them twice a day, especially last thing at night. It is important to use only a smear of fluoride toothpaste, as this is all you need to prevent tooth decay at this age.

Gentle brushing of your baby's teeth is important to keep their mouth fresh and clean.

Make sure you help your little one when they start brushing their teeth. It's important they are watched to do this as they won't be able to brush properly on their own.

Use the Brush, Book, and Bed routine to help them get used to brushing their teeth last thing at night and this will help you not to forget.

Remember tooth decay can start very early in life. Register your baby with a dental practice early and take them to see their dentist (even before their first teeth come through) to help them grow a healthy smile.

Dentistry is free for children. Visiting the dentist allows young children to get used to the sights, sounds and smells of a dental practice, making later check-ups much easier and more comfortable for them.

To find a local dentist  
[www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists)

### Books at Bedtime

Children love stories, and sharing a book with them helps build their imagination. Books teach them about the world around them – the pictures encourage them to spot details and differences, and stories help them to develop listening and thinking skills. The more stories you read aloud, the more words your baby will hear and the better they'll be able to talk. It's also precious time together that creates memories and a great bond.

There is no right or wrong way to share a book. What's important is that you do it your way and that you enjoy it – so choose a book you both like, cuddle up and enjoy your time together.

## Top Tips For Settling Your Baby

A good bedtime routine consists of regular and calming activities for your baby. Put your baby to bed at the same time every night. You should do this even if you know they're going to get up during the night. You're setting a routine that will help make regular bedtimes easier for yourself in the future.

- Babies may find baths very relaxing and this can help your child before you put them to bed.
- Changing into night clothes and a fresh nappy will help baby to feel comfortable
- Sharing a bed time story or nursery rhyme will help to soothe and relax
- Dimming the lights will create a calm atmosphere
- Giving a goodnight kiss and cuddle makes baby feel safe to sleep

When our babies are young we see sleeping patterns. This helps us to establish a healthy routine so that we can help them to tell the difference between night and day.

As you start to see these patterns of sleep you will feel more confident at creating your routine, which in later months to come, will be a healthy bedtime routine of Brush, Book, Bed.

### Where to Find More Information

Ask your health visitor for help and advice.

Free online children's oral health training  
[www.bit.ly/babiesteeth](http://www.bit.ly/babiesteeth)

Get tips and advice on your pregnancy  
[www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy)

Get help to buy food and milk  
[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

Tips and advice on how to have a happy toddler  
[www.nhs.uk/start4life/toddler](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/toddler)

Ideas on how to share books with your baby  
[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

Produced in partnership with Herefordshire Libraries.



**Libraries are for everyone!**

For information and opening times visit our website.

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/libraries)

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