

# Dental Fact Sheet - Babies

In Derby **1 in 4 children have had tooth decay by the age of 5**. Tooth decay can lead to:

- Toothache
- Difficulty eating and sleeping
- Infection
- Time off from school
- Needing a general anaesthetic for treatment
- Sepsis

It is vital that all healthcare professionals are giving good advice to families from birth to prevent tooth decay occurring.

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All parents and guardians should be advised to **take children to see a dentist as soon as their first teeth come through**, or before their first birthday.

Children's first teeth normally come through around 6 months old, although can be present from birth.



**Teeth should be brushed as soon as they come through** using a small soft toothbrush and a smear of toothpaste containing at least 1000ppm fluoride. Brush last thing at night and one other time of day.

It's OK to use bottles for expressed breast milk, formula milk, or cooled boiled water. However, **children should not be left with bottles overnight**, and bottles should not be used for juices or sugary drinks.

Around the age of 6 months children should be encouraged to drink from a free-flowing or open top cup, so that **bottle use does not continue past their first birthday**.

It's fine to use dummies but **don't dip them in anything sweet** and avoid using them after 1 years old.

When a baby starts eating solid foods, encourage them to eat savoury food and drinks with no sugar. **If children are given sweet foods, dried fruit or fruit juice, this should only be at mealtimes.**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/looking-after-your-infants-teeth/>

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NHS dental care for all children under 18 is free. You can direct families to find an NHS dentist via:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Dentists/LocationSearch/3>

Children with significant additional needs can be referred by a health or social care professional to the **Community Dental Services**. The referral form and acceptance criteria can be accessed here:

<https://communitydentalservices.co.uk/patient-information/referrals/derbyshire-referrals/>

For more information visit 'A practical guide to children's teeth': <https://www.bspd.co.uk/Portals/0/A%20practical%20guide%20to%20children's%20teeth%20Nov%202016.pdf>

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