

# How to Encourage Kids to Take Care of Their Teeth



## HOW TO ENCOURAGE KIDS TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR TEETH

Parents of young children know that getting kids to brush their teeth can sometimes feel like pulling teeth. Kids have a long history of disliking dental care, which can frustrate parents who know the importance and long-lasting benefits of proper dental hygiene. While many youngsters may never excitedly run to the bathroom to brush their teeth, parents can try various approaches to get kids to embrace proper dental care.



### START EARLY

Parents should not hesitate to begin cleaning kids' teeth once the first tooth appears. The earlier dental care is part of a child's routine, the more likely he or she is to accept it as part of everyday life. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends using a soft-bristled brush with a small head. Ideally, use a toothbrush designed for infants, brushing teeth once per day at bedtime. The AAPD advises taking kids to visit a pediatric dentist when the first tooth appears, or no later than the child's first birthday.

### COMPLIMENT KIDS AFTER POSITIVE DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

When pediatric dentist appointments go well, compliment children and express your pride in them for taking dental hygiene as seriously as they do.



### MAKE IT A GROUP EFFORT

Young children love to imitate their parents' actions and behaviors, and moms and dads can use that adoration to their advantage when trying to get kids to brush their teeth. Brush teeth together as a family, making it seem like an enjoyable twice-daily activity. Get down on kids' level and show them how to brush. If kids are resistant, engage them in conversation while brushing so they don't even realize they're cleaning away.

### INVOLVE KIDS IN CHOOSING THEIR DENTAL CARE PRODUCTS

While parents should be mindful of the type of toothbrush their children use, always sticking with products recommended by their child's pediatric dentist, let youngsters choose their toothbrush and toothpaste. Kids might prefer a particular flavor of toothpaste, and a colorful toothbrush with a favorite film or television character might make kids more enthusiastic and less fussy about brushing.



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