

## Take good care of your teeth

- Brush the teeth every morning and evening
- Use fluoride toothpaste
- Use xylitol after every meal
- Eat healthily and avoid snacking
- Drink water if you are thirsty
- Go for a check-up at the dentist if you are invited to do so

### Contact us:

Electronic services at  
[www.ekhva.fi](http://www.ekhva.fi)

Appointment service for oral health care,  
tel: +358 5 352 7059

Mon-Fri 7 am-4 pm

Please call after 10 am if you are making an appointment  
that is not urgent.

### Sources used in this brochure:

- <http://www.hammaslaakariliitto.fi>
- Oral care guide for pre-school-aged children
- [www.kaypahoito.fi](http://www.kaypahoito.fi) >potilaalle- hampaassa reikä-eikä!

[www.ekhva.fi](http://www.ekhva.fi)



Oral care for children aged  
3-5 years

Brochure for parents

Tooth decay (dental caries) is an infectious disease that can be prevented by good self-care and a healthy lifestyle. It is a good idea to get children used to these things at the earliest possible stage, and the best way to teach a child about good oral health is for the parents to set a good example. However, cavities may appear in the teeth if the layer of plaque on the surface is not removed and if too much sugar is eaten.

Follow these instructions to keep your child's teeth intact:

### **Brush the teeth:**

It is a good idea for children to practise brushing their own teeth from an early age. The parents should brush the teeth of children aged under 6 twice every day. The parents must monitor children's tooth care until they reach secondary school age. Children's toothbrushes are available with small, soft brush heads. The teeth should be brushed systematically so that all of the surfaces of the teeth are cleaned.

### **Use fluoride toothpaste:**

For children aged 3–5, it is recommended to use an amount of toothpaste about the size of the fingernail on the little finger twice per day. The fluoride content of the toothpaste should be 1,000–1,100 ppm. Special toothpastes (such as toothpastes designed to prevent tartar) are not suitable for children.

If the fluoride content of the domestic water is between 0.7 mg/l (0.7 ppm) and 1.5 mg/l, children under the age of 6 should use a toothpaste with a fluoride content no higher than 500 ppm. If the fluoride content of the domestic water is over 1.5 mg/l, fluoride toothpaste is not recommended for children under the age of 6. Oral health care professionals will assess whether any extra fluoride is needed.

### **Nutrition and xylitol:**

The most important aspects in maintaining children's oral health are healthy eating habits and good oral hygiene. The best way to learn these is to follow the example set by the parents.

Healthy eating habits for children are based on regular meals and healthy snacks. Water is the best drink if children are thirsty, and they should drink milk at meal times.

Many acidic ingredients, such as freshly squeezed juice, oranges and lemons, can cause the tooth enamel to dissolve. Baked goods, biscuits and crisps are also bad for oral health, particularly if they are eaten frequently. Snacking between meals and continuously eating a lot of sugary products will expose the teeth to decay. Instead of having a "sweet day", it is recommended to eat sweet treats after a meal once per week.

Pure xylitol products are recommended: use at least 5 g of xylitol products a day after meals and snacks. This can be done by using 2 pieces of pure xylitol chewing gum 3–5 times a day after every meal.

### **Get your teeth treated regularly:**

Children aged 3 and 5 visit the dental nurse or hygienist at Ekhva's oral health care unit to have their teeth checked.

However, if tooth decay has already begun to occur, it can be prevented from advancing and, in the best case, fillings can be avoided. Early treatment, planned with an oral health care professional, is the best way to achieve this.