

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

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:

- Heikka, H., Hiiri, A., Honkala, S., Keksinen, H. & Sirviö, K. 2009. Terve suu. [Healthy mouth] Kustannus Oy Duodecim: Helsinki
- Finnish Dental Association.
<http://www.hammaslaakariliitto.fi/fi/suunterveys/suunterveys-eri-ikakausina/lasten-ja-nuorten-suunterveys/koululaisten-ja-nuorten>
- Children's teeth. Päijät-Häme Social and Health Care Municipal Federation. <http://www.lapsenhampaat.fi>

www.ekhva.fi



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**Oral care for children aged
6–7 years**

Brochure for parents

When permanent teeth erupt

The first permanent teeth, the lower-front teeth, come through at the age of 5 or 6. The first permanent molars also begin to erupt at around the same time. When the permanent molars erupt, they are lower than the milk teeth in front of them. Molars also have a grooved masticating surface, so they are difficult to clean thoroughly. Parents need to help with this.

The teeth will continue to change and permanent teeth will erupt until the child is 13 years old. By this age, all of the permanent teeth have usually come through, except for the wisdom teeth.

Brushing the teeth and using fluoride

Teeth should be brushed twice a day: in the morning and the evening. For children, choose a toothbrush with a small and soft head. Electric toothbrushes are very suitable for brushing children's teeth.

The parents are responsible for brushing the teeth, but it is also good for children to learn to brush their teeth themselves. Parents should brush the teeth of children aged under 6. Up to the middle school age, the parents should still check when children brush their teeth themselves as children's motor skills may not have developed to the extent necessary to brush the teeth well enough. The teeth should be brushed in order to ensure that all of the surfaces of the teeth are cleaned thoroughly. It takes 2 minutes to clean teeth thoroughly.

From the age of 6, children should use a toothpaste with a fluorine content of 1,450 ppm. Use a lump of toothpaste measuring 0.5–2 cm

every time the teeth are brushed. If the fluoride content of the domestic water is between 0.7 mg/l and 1.5 mg/l, the child should use a toothpaste with a fluoride content no higher than 500 ppm. Special toothpastes should not be used to clean children's teeth. Dental professionals will assess whether any extra fluoride is needed.

Nutrition and xylitol

Schoolchildren should eat five meals a day (breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner and supper). Xylitol pastilles or chewing gum should be used after every meal as xylitol stops the state of acid attack caused by eating. Make sure the child has a varied diet with a regular rhythm to the meals so that snacking between meals will not be necessary. Snacking is bad for oral health as it promotes tooth decay.

Water is the best drink for quenching thirst. Soft drinks (including "light" variants), flavoured water, sports drinks, energy drinks and juices (including home-made berry juices) can cause tooth enamel to dissolve – this is known as erosion. Drinks containing sugar can also cause tooth decay. Milk, buttermilk and water are recommended with meals. It is safe to drink one glass of pure or freshly squeezed juice per day with a meal.

Sweets and other treats should not be eaten daily. Eating sweet treats after a meal once per week is a better option than having a "sweet day". Xylitol has beneficial effects on oral health. Xylitol is particularly good for erupting teeth. To obtain the maximum health benefit from xylitol, 5 grams should be consumed daily. Xylitol should be used 3–5 times in a day.