

# Brushing Basics: Building Strong Habits From The Start

A parent's guide to confident brushing at every age

Highlighting the importance of children's oral health, this flyer shows how parents and caregivers can support healthy habits from an early age. Supporting your child's oral health through each stage of development sets the foundation for a lifetime of healthy smiles.

## Birth to 12 months

Wipe your baby's gums with a soft, clean cloth or silicone finger brush after feeds. Once the first tooth appears, start brushing twice daily with a soft-bristled baby toothbrush. Use water only - no toothpaste yet. Schedule your child's first dental visit by their first birthday.

## 12 months to 3 years

Begin using a small amount of fluoride toothpaste - about the size of a grain of rice. Brush twice daily (especially before bed). Sit your child on your lap or stand behind them while brushing. Start gently flossing once any two teeth touch. Children this age need full parental assistance when brushing.

## 3 to 6 years

Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.  
Encourage your child to try brushing, but always supervise and finish the job. Teach them to spit out toothpaste, not rinse.  
Establish a regular brushing routine in the morning and evening.  
Use a fun timer or song to help brush for two full minutes.

## 6 years and up

Most children begin brushing more independently around this age, but supervision is still important. Remind them to brush all surfaces - not just the front teeth. Introduce proper flossing technique, or use child-friendly flossers. Reinforce the importance of brushing before school and before bed.

## Common mistakes to avoid

Using too much toothpaste  
Skipping brushing after sugary snacks or drinks  
Not brushing for the full two minutes  
Letting young children brush unsupervised too early  
Forgetting to replace toothbrushes every 3 months or after illness

- Healthy brushing habits support strong smiles
- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Clean between teeth daily
- Eat a diet low in added sugar
- Visit the dentist regularly from age one

For more free patient  
resources visit:



Henry Schein is proud to support dentists and specialists across Australia with the tools and resources they need to guide families through every stage of oral development. From early childhood to confident teenage smiles, we're behind every step forward.