

# Tips and Tools for Tooth Brushing

## WHY TOOTH BRUSHING IS IMPORTANT: FAST FACTS

- Oral health is an important and integral part of overall health!
- Sweet and high carbohydrate foods feed the germs that cause tooth decay
- Cavities and decay in baby teeth can spread to permanent teeth, causing pain and damage
- Regular brushing with fluoride toothpaste will remove germs and stop cavities
- Healthy baby teeth will allow your child to chew, eat, and speak properly as well as guide adult teeth into place  
*(Kidsoralhealth.org)*

## TOOTH BRUSHING BASICS

- ❶ Creating an environment that is conducive to tooth brushing
  - ▶ Keep all your child's tooth brushing supplies in a special place (E.g. A basket in the bathroom)
  - ▶ Be consistent! Have your child brush their teeth in the same place everyday
  - ▶ Create a tooth brushing environment that meets your child's sensory needs
- ❷ Choose your child's toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss
  - ▶ Pick a toothbrush that is the right size for your child's mouth
  - ▶ Find a texture and flavor of toothpaste that your child enjoys!
  - ▶ Find floss that tastes good and is the appropriate thickness for your child's teeth and try a flosser, which may make flossing easier!

## GENERAL TIPS TO MAKE TOOTH BRUSHING FUN

- Sing or play a song that your child likes while they are brushing their teeth; this will provide a timeline for how long they should brush their teeth for (E.g. Use a musical toothbrush, play a song on youtube, or sing "this is how we brush our teeth")
- Use a token chart, where your child can earn a sticker or stamp when they complete their tooth brushing routine
- Offer a lot of praise and encouragement throughout all steps of the tooth brushing process
- Use a fun smartphone app (see resource list) to help motivate your child to brush their teeth

## INTRODUCTION TO TOOTH BRUSHING: BUILDING A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION

- Let your child play with their toothbrush outside of the bathroom in a way that they choose; this will help them build a positive association between the toothbrush and having fun!
- Slowly introduce the idea that the toothbrush is used for brushing teeth. Have your child brush toy animal/dolls teeth or encourage them to practice brushing your teeth
- When your child is ready to try and brush their teeth, have them participate as much as possible in each step; this will help them feel an increasing sense of mastery over the task  
*(National Museum of Dentistry, n.d).*