

## Teeth and dental health


Looking after your child's first (baby) teeth helps give their adult teeth a good start.

Care for your baby's teeth by:

- > cleaning their teeth when they first appear with a small soft toothbrush or clean cloth
- > brushing twice a day, after breakfast and before bed
- > avoiding toothpaste until 18 months
- > using only breastmilk, water or formula in their bottle – avoid fruit juice, cordial or fizzy drinks
- > not putting your baby to bed with a bottle – this is the main cause of tooth decay in children under 5 years
- > if your baby uses a dummy, cleaning it under running water (not in your mouth) to avoid the transfer of germs that cause tooth decay.

### For your toddler or preschooler:

- > brush teeth twice a day, after breakfast and before bed
- > use a low-fluoride children's toothpaste and a small soft brush
- > lift your toddler's top lip once a month to check for early signs of tooth decay. White lines on the tooth near the gum line can be the beginning of decay. Visit the SA Dental Service if you are worried or see your dentist
- > help prevent tooth decay by limiting how often your child has sugary food and drink, including juice.



**Your baby can start to drink from a cup at 6 months old and after 12 months can have all drinks from a cup.**

