



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
**MERTON**



# **ORAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS**



# ORAL HEALTH

Oral health is part of general health and wellbeing and contributes to the development of a healthy child and school readiness.

Tooth decay is the most common oral disease affecting children and young people in England, yet it is largely preventable.

Regularly consuming food and drinks containing sugar increases the risk of tooth decay and can lead to an increased risk of obesity and type-2 diabetes. Children are still consuming more than the recommended daily limit.

Tooth decay can cause problems with eating, sleeping, communication and socialising, and results in days being missed from school.

Although oral health is improving in England, the oral health survey of five-year-old children in 2019, showed that just under a quarter of 5 year olds have tooth decay.



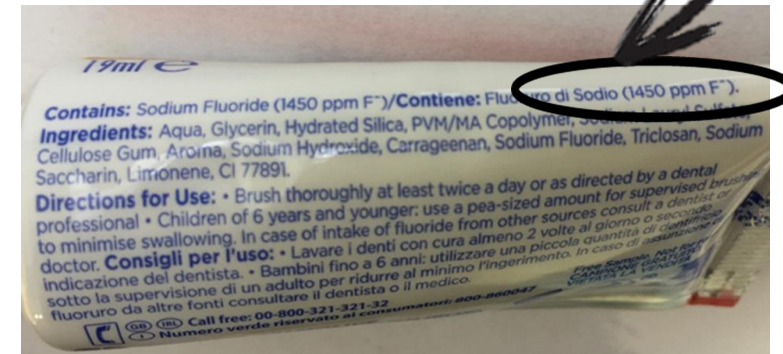
# ORAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS

Improving the oral health of children is a Public Health England priority, with an ambition that every child grows up free of tooth decay to help give them the best start in life.

Oral Health advice for children 0-5yrs:

- Support breastfeeding
- As soon as teeth erupt in the mouth brush them twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste
- Brush last thing at night and on one other occasion
- Use fluoride toothpaste containing no less than 1,000ppm fluoride
- It is good practice to use only a smear of toothpaste
- The frequency and amount of sugary food and drinks should be reduced
- Parents/carers should be advised to take their children to visit the dentist as soon as the first tooth appears in the mouth, at about 6 months, and then on a regular basis
- Signpost services to relevant services including, dentists, health visitors, children centres, GPs.

The amount of fluoride can often be found at the back of the toothpaste within the ingredients section



# ORAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS

Sugar is one of the main causes of tooth decay. The type of sugars most adults and children in the UK eat too much of are "free sugars". These are:

- Any sugars added to food or drinks. These include sugars in biscuits, chocolate, flavoured yoghurts, breakfast cereals and fizzy drinks.
- Sugars in honey, syrups (such as maple, agave and golden), nectars (such as blossom), and unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juices and smoothies. The sugars in these foods occur naturally but still count as free sugars.

## **The government recommends that:**

- Adults should have no more than 30g of free sugars a day, (roughly equivalent to 7 sugar cubes).
- Children aged 7 to 10 should have no more than 24g of free sugars a day (6 sugar cubes).
- Children aged 4 to 6 should have no more than 19g of free sugars a day (5 sugar cubes).
- Children under 4 should avoid free sugars

For context, a can of cola can have as much as 9 cubes of sugar – more than the recommended daily limit for adults.



# ORAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS

Tips to reduce free sugars and prevent tooth decay:

- Reduce the amount of food and drinks that contain free sugars – such as sweets, chocolates, cakes, biscuits, jams, honey, fruit smoothies and dried fruit – and limit them to mealtimes.
- Instead of sugary fizzy drinks or sugary squash, go for water, lower-fat milk, or sugar-free, diet or no-added-sugar drinks.
- Check nutrition labels to help pick the foods with less added sugar or lower-sugar versions.
- Have a balanced diet - The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.



The Eatwell Guide applies to most of us except children under 2 as they have different nutritional needs. Anyone with special dietary requirements or medical needs should check with a registered dietitian on how to adapt the Eatwell Guide to meet their individual needs.



# ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM

The Oral Health Promotion Team actively participates in multiple local health events across nine boroughs in South London.

Their main objective is to disseminate crucial oral health messages to the local children, families, healthcare professionals, and care providers.

They offer oral health education, training, and regular updates on evidence-based oral health practices. The team has established strong, enduring connections within the community to enhance awareness and offer personalised guidance.

Their endeavours strive to significantly decrease the prevalence of oral diseases in children and other vulnerable people in society.

[kch-tr.oralhealthpromotion@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.oralhealthpromotion@nhs.net)



# COMMUNITY SPECIAL CARE DENTISTRY

The Community Special Care Dentistry Department (CSCD) provide special care dental treatment to children and adults in Merton and the surrounding boroughs.

The CSCD service provides a full range of dental treatment and oral healthcare for patients for whom treatment by general dental practice is unsuitable. This includes children, young people and adults who have:

- ❖ a physical disability
- ❖ a complex medical condition
- ❖ a learning disability
- ❖ a severe mental health condition
- ❖ severe anxiety or phobia.

The team also provide a service for plus-size (bariatric) patients and those who need a home visit or who are experiencing homelessness. The team can provide sedation and have a good skill mix, which includes experienced dental therapists and dentists skilled in treating children.

Emergency care is not provided, and a professional referral is required for these services.

020 3299 3480 / [kch-tr.cdsreferrals@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.cdsreferrals@nhs.net)



# ORAL HEALTH SUPPORT



[Find a dentist](#)

The NHS website enables residents to search for their nearest dentist. There is also information about whether dentists are accepting new NHS patients.



[NHS dental charge exemption](#)

The NHS website provides information about who is entitled to free NHS dental treatment in England. Residents will not have to pay if they are under 18, under 19 and in full-time education, pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months, being treated in an NHS hospital or receiving low income benefits.



[Children's teeth](#)

The NHS website provides information and advice on keeping children's teeth and mouths healthy. Tips include using a mirror to help a child see exactly where the brush is cleaning their teeth and make tooth brushing as fun as possible by using an egg timer to time it for about 2 minutes. There are also links to other pages that cover taking care of your teeth and gums, healthy teeth and gums, dental check up's and dental treatment.



[Food scanner app](#)

The NHS Food Scanner app helps families see how much sugar, saturated fat, and salt are in everyday food and drinks. The app suggests healthier swaps, by encouraging users to choose "Good Choice" products.





# ORAL HEALTH SUPPORT



[Sugar: the facts](#)

The NHS website provides the facts on sugar which is the main cause of tooth decay. Information is provided on the recommended intake of free sugars and tips to reduce free sugars.



[Healthier food swaps](#)

The NHS Better Health: Healthier Family site offers simple food swap ideas which can help cut down on sugar, salt and fat. Some of the healthy food swaps include plain popcorn or rice cakes for crisps and malt loaf or teacake instead of a cake.



[BSPD](#)

The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) offers information and advice on oral hygiene for parents and professionals. The website also offers videos for children of different ages to help make toothbrushing fun.



[Dental Check By One](#)

The Dental Check by One campaign was established by the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) in partnership with the Office of the Chief Dental Officer for England to ensure all children see a dentist as their teeth come through, or by their first birthday, at the latest.



# MERTON LOCAL DIRECTORIES

Merton Local Directories are great resources to keep up to date with activities and services available for children, young people and adults in Merton.

[Merton Local Directories](#)

## Welcome to Merton Local Directories

Support, services, advice and things to do



### Family Services Directory

Support and information for expectant parents and families with children and young people aged 0-19.

- [Activities and leisure](#)
- [Childcare and education](#)
- [Community groups and places](#)
- [Family support and parenting](#)
- [Health and wellbeing](#)
- [Information, advice and support](#)

[See more](#)




### SEND Local Offer

Support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25.

- [Activities and leisure](#)
- [Education and childcare](#)
- [Employment and training](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Preparing for adulthood](#)
- [Social care](#)

[See more](#)



### Young Merton

Support for care leavers moving into adulthood and independent living aged 16-25.

- [Education and learning](#)
- [Have a say. Get involved](#)
- [Keeping safe and healthy](#)
- [Local offer for care leavers](#)
- [Things to do](#)
- [Work, money and living](#)

[See more](#)



### Adult Support Services Directory

Support for adults on employment, education, health, housing, financial advice and things to do in the community.

- [Activities and leisure](#)
- [Health and wellbeing](#)
- [Housing matters](#)
- [How to access help](#)
- [Keeping safe](#)
- [Money matters](#)

[See more](#)



### Family Hubs Directory

Connecting families and young people with access to help, when and where they need it.

- [Family Voice](#)
- [Home life, finances and staying safe](#)
- [Keeping your family healthy](#)
- [Play, youth and family learning](#)
- [SEND support \(Special educational needs and disabilities\)](#)
- [Start for Life](#)

[See more](#)



# FURTHER SUPPORT

Families can receive further information and guidance on oral health improvements through the Family Information Support Hubs (FISH).

FISH provides parents/carers with information, support and guidance on all aspects of family life.

FISH sessions take place Monday – Friday with FREE face-to-face or telephone appointments available. Appointments can be booked via [Eventbrite](#) either by a parent/carer or a practitioner on their behalf.

Or parents/carers can come along to one of the FISH drop-in sessions (no appointment needed):

Family Hub at Church Rd Children Centre – Mondays, 1.30pm-4.30pm

Family Hub at Acacia Children Centre – Wednesdays, 9.00am-12.00pm

