



Health
Northern NSW
Local Health District

Mullumbimby Dental Clinic Free dental services for the Byron Shire

Information for parents' \ carers of school aged children

Oral Health Contact Centre

1300 651 625

The Northern NSW Local Health Network Child Oral Health Service provides free dental services to school aged children. The service can be accessed via a public dental health line

1300 651 625. The clinic is located at the Mullumbimby Hospital. Each year The Child Oral Health Service also provides a School Dental Assessment Program offering dental assessments for all Kindergarten children at all schools in the Byron Shire.

Baby teeth are important. They are vital for chewing healthy foods, learning to speak, smiling and keeping the correct spaces for adult teeth to grow into. Some baby teeth stay in the mouth til 12-13 years of age. When decay is present in the mouth it may spread to other teeth.

Adult teeth start to erupt into the mouth at around age 6. Adult molars erupt behind baby teeth at around the same time children lose their first front baby teeth. It is important that adults' help children brush their teeth til around age 8. Children often don't have the skills to clean their own teeth effectively - particularly the new adult molars.



The risk of tooth decay can increase if children eat too often throughout the day. Each time sugars are eaten, acids are produced which can weaken the teeth.

Tooth decay can cause severe pain, speech problems, eating difficulties leading to poor overall health and poor self esteem. Tooth decay is 100% preventable. Decay is caused by bacteria in the mouth using sugars from food and drinks to produce acid. This acid attacks teeth causing mineral loss. In its early stages tooth decay can be reversed. Parents are encouraged to look into their child's mouth regularly. 'Lift the lip', look for white spots around the gum line which may be the early stages of decay. Regular dental check-ups can prevent minor problems becoming major ones and prevent unnecessary pain. It is encouraged that children have their first dental check-up

at 1yr. Parents are advised to encourage a positive attitude towards dental visits. Treat the visit as routine. Avoid using negative terms. Answer questions but do not give too much detail as dental professionals have special ways of explaining procedures so as not to frighten children.

Important points to remember

- Brush teeth twice a day with a pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Research shows this reduces decay much more than brushing just once a day.
- Visit the dentist or dental therapist every 6-12 months. Encourage healthy snacks and a nutritious diet.
- Avoid unnecessary sugars such as soft drink, cordial, fruit juices.
- It is best to avoid sugary foods in lunch boxes such as cakes, biscuits, roll-ups, muesli bars and dried fruit
- Ensure your child has a small piece of cheese to eat each day. Cheese contains casein which leaves a film on the teeth that counters the effect of corrosive plaque acids. Cheese also contains calcium and phosphorous which work to rebuild damaged tooth enamel. Research shows that children that eat a small piece of cheese daily have a lower risk of dental decay.

**For appointments phone:
Oral Health Contact Centre: 1300 651 625**



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