

# MIGHTY MOUTH

## Parents and Guardians Guide



Dental Health Foundation  
Ireland



Féilidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

# Tooth-Friendly Guide

## A Guide for Parents and Guardians

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Over the next few weeks I will be showing your children how to look after their teeth. I will be teaching them:

- how to brush their teeth properly and
- how to choose foods and drinks that are tooth-friendly.

I will give them exercises to do at home. I hope you will be able to help them finish these exercises.

I will give them some leaflets, which I hope will answer some of the questions you may have about your children's teeth.

A member of your local dental team is available to answer any other questions.

The telephone number to contact us at is **(01) 6464550**

Yours sincerely

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Teacher



# Tooth-Friendly Eating

## A Guide for Parents and Guardians

### SUGAR



- Milk and water are tooth-friendly. These are the best drinks for children and should be given during and between meals.
- Cut down on how often children eat sugary foods and drinks.
- Sugar + Bacteria = Acid Monster = Acid Attack on the tooth. Acid dissolves the enamel of teeth.



- The trick is to reduce the number of acid attacks. Remember everytime sugar goes into your child's mouth it can cause an acid attack.
- Fizzy and diet drinks are not tooth-friendly because they put teeth at risk of decay and can also cause erosion of the enamel. This is due to their acidic content.
- Try to keep unsweetened fruit juice for meal times.



### FOOD LABELS

#### Did you know!

- Harmful sugars hidden in foods and drinks are not easy to identify. If you look at ingredient labels you might be surprised that products saying 'no artificial additives', 'low fat' or 'healthy' may contain a large amount of added sugar.
- The sugar names are: sucrose, glucose, corn syrup, fructose, maltose, dextrose, and fruit sugar.
- Products labelled as being 'low in sugar' may only be low in sucrose sugar and high in other sugars!
- Some products saying 'no added sugar' may contain fruit sugars instead of sucrose and can still be harmful.

# School Lunches

## A Guide for Parents and Guardians

Healthy eating can be fun. Remember, a good lunch can go a long way to keeping your children healthy. A healthy lunch should include foods from the four main shelves of the food pyramid. Make lunchtime more fun by trying some of the ideas mentioned below.



► Indicates the number of recommended daily servings

### Breads and cereals shelf

These foods help provide us with energy.

To make sandwiches more fun - cut them in different shapes and mix brown and white bread. Don't forget to use rolls, crispbreads, french sticks, crackers, pitta bread or scones to give variety. Sandwich fillings can come from the different shelves of the food pyramid.

# School Lunches

## A Guide for Parents and Guardians

### Fruit and vegetable shelf

The foods from this shelf provide us with vitamins, minerals and fibre. Try and use something from this shelf in a sandwich such as banana, or salad with tomatoes, peppers, carrot and celery sticks. On cold days, why not try a flask of soup? Remember to include a piece of fruit. Fruits such as mandarin oranges and bananas are easy for children to peel.

### Milk, cheese and yogurt shelf

A cheese sandwich or cheese and crackers, yogurt or yogurt drinks or homemade milk shakes can help provide important calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Desserts like rice pudding and custard can also be a source of milk.

### Meat, chicken, fish and egg shelf

These foods are important for growth and for iron. Choose from ham, tuna, salmon, sardines, chicken, turkey and eggs.

### Top shelf

Foods from the top shelf like chocolate, sweets and bars should not be offered as a substitute for other foods and should only be used as an occasional treat. Remember these are the foods that can cause tooth decay.

### Drinks

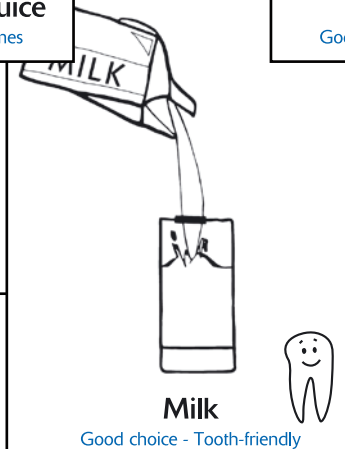
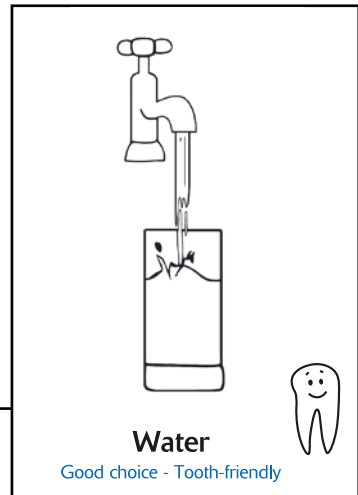
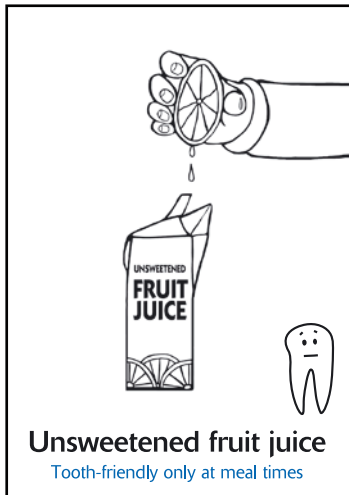
Always include a drink with lunch but remember to choose a tooth-friendly drink. Water and milk are the best choice. Unsweetened fruit juice is a good choice with lunch. Sugar-free squashes can also be used with meals. Vary the drink by offering soup, yogurt drinks or homemade milk shakes.

Remember to look at those labels when buying drinks to make sure you are making a tooth-friendly choice.

Some primary schools provide free milk for all pupils. It may be useful to find out if this facility is available at your children's school.

# Drinks Guide

## A Guide for Parents and Guardians



# Cleaning Your Teeth

## A Guide for Parents and Guardians

### General Brushing

- Under two years of age **do not use toothpaste.**
- From two until seven years you can start to use toothpaste, but only use a small pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Children under seven years are not able to brush their own teeth properly. They need your help, the same way they need help shampooing their hair and tying their shoelaces.
- Children should never eat or swallow toothpaste.
- Help your child brush twice a day, in the morning and just before bedtime.
- It takes three minutes to brush teeth properly (about the length of a song).



### A Toothbrushing Guide



1. Brush the outside surfaces of the lower teeth first. Place the brush where the teeth and gums meet. Start at the back and move slowly forwards. Move the brush in small circles.



2. Repeat for inside surfaces. Clean the insides of the front teeth, using gentle up and down strokes. Brush the biting surfaces.



3. Repeat for the top teeth.

# Dental Services

## A Guide for Parents and Guardians

### Who can use the children's dental service?

- Children under six
- Children who are attending primary school
- All children who have left primary school and are under 16
- Children with special needs
- Child dependants of medical cardholders

If you have any concerns about your child's teeth, you should contact your local health centre.

### The school dental programme

Children at primary schools and children with special needs have their teeth checked in selected classes each school year. These children may receive treatment at their local health centre.

If you have a question please call us at **(01) 6464550**

or visit the Dental Services Section of the government's oasis website

<http://www.oasis.gov.ie>

