















**COMMUNITY PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND
 PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES**

TEETH CLEANING

DIFFICULTY	IDEAS TO TRY
<p>BEFORE STARTING</p>    	<p>Establish a routine for when your child will clean their teeth.</p> <p>Do not leave it until too close to bedtime as by this time the child may be tired and less tolerant.</p> <p>Make the bathroom a calm place – neutral walls and towels, minimal clutter to eliminate unnecessary stimuli. Limit noise/music etc. Eliminate smells.</p> <p>Consider type of toothbrush</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric or manual • Size and shape of the toothbrush • Type of bristles –soft or firm • A smaller toothbrush head and softer bristles may be preferable. Consider a baby toothbrush • Or Superbrush available from www.dentocare.co.uk Cleans all sides of the tooth with a simple forward and back action. <p>Consider type of toothpaste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong or mild minty • Fruity flavour • Punch and Judy toothpaste comes in several flavours for milk and permanent teeth e.g. strawberry, orange, tutti-frutti available on the internet. • Oranurse do an unflavoured

	<p>toothpaste available on the Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you put the flavour such as “Orange flavoured toothpaste” in the search engine a range of toothpastes in that flavour will come up.
<p>CALMING STRATEGIES PRIOR TO TEETH CLEANING</p>  	<p>Encourage the child to participate in an activity you know they enjoy and that has a calming affect i.e. trampoline, rolled in a rug or weighted blanket, fine motor activity – Lego/jigsaw/crayoning.</p> <p>Use some deep pressure activities with your child. For example – pushing against each others hands, the child pushing their hands together, pushing down on your child’s shoulders and long deep strokes down their arms and back</p>
<p>TO DESENSITISE THE MOUTH</p>    	<p>Ask the child to do some activities to give deep pressure and proprioception to the mouth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretch the mouth wide open as if having a big yawn • Stretch the mouth into a big smile to say ‘Weeeeeeee’ • Press the lips together firmly • Clench the teeth together • Chew something firm such as the corner of a towel or flannel. Or a Chew Stick or Chew’llry Available from www.specialdirect.com and other internet sources. • Use different textures to rub around the mouth and down the cheeks. Sponge, net ball, textured wash cloth, soft nail brush, rough towel etc. NB it is important the child chooses the texture and applies it themselves.

<p>TEETH CLEANING TECHNIQUE</p> 	<p>Discuss with your child how best to clean their teeth.</p> <p>Divide the mouth into 4 quarters Top and bottom, and left and right sides.</p> <p>In each quarter the teeth have 3 areas to clean front, back and top (chewing surface)</p> <p>The child needs to start in one quarter ie bottom left and brushes the front the back and the top. Then move to top left and repeat brushing the front the back and the top.</p> <p>Repeat with bottom right and top right.</p> <p>(If the child is right handed the left side is easier to start with, if left handed the right side is easier.)</p> <p>If using an electric toothbrush this is easy as the child can move the toothbrush across the teeth.</p> <p>Get the child to rub their teeth with their finger to learn where they need to brush. Verbally back this up with descriptors <i>'feel the sharp pointy tops, smooth sides, reach over to the back'</i></p>
<p>STRATEGIES FOR SENSITIVITY</p>	<p>Use the desensitising strategies previously discussed.</p> <p>Use a counting method to help the child feel in control of the cleaning. When brushing (this is easier using an electric brush) count to 3 or 5 so the child knows the task will stop.</p>

	<p>Applying pressure with the fingers and rubbing the cheek/mouth over the teeth can help to reduce the brushing sensation.</p> <p>For Example When brushing the bottom right front side say '<i>brushing 1 2 3 off</i>' so the child knows it will soon stop. Deep pressure /squashing the fingers into the cheek over the teeth when the brushing has stopped can help to reduce the sensation. Repeat on another area of the teeth</p>
<p>TO HELP A CHILD WHO CANNOT CLEAN THEIR OWN TEETH</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a small toothbrush • Count as a way of helping the child know you are starting and stopping • Press and rub the mouth over the teeth that has been cleaned to 'cancel out' the sensation • Only brush for a short period then gradually build up as the child becomes more tolerant • Respect the child's need to stop. • Try using a finger brush. The child may prefer this to a brush or if you have to clean their teeth you may get better access and accuracy. <p>Available from numerous internet sites</p>
<p>AFTER TEETH CLEANING</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise all efforts with a reward chart or short time on a favourite activity • Repeat calming activities such as deep pressure activities. Rolled in a heavy rug, sustained pushing or pulling activities • Or do some of the activities listed earlier to desensitise the mouth ie chewing, yawning.

NAME:

DATE:

Ideas to try	Outcome
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	