

10 Tricks to Make Your Kids LOVE Brushing Their Teeth!

Many parents of young children wrestle with the nightly challenge of getting their kids ready for bed and settled down to sleep. And one very important part of that battle includes convincing kids to brush their teeth the *right* way. Dental hygiene should be a priority for families, since training kids to take care of their health develops good habits later in life. Protecting your kids' teeth against cavities early on will also save you money and trouble in the future.

But if you're stumped as to how to get your kids to learn how to brush their teeth, check out these easy tricks to try before bedtime (and the next morning, too!)...

How to Get Your Kids to Brush:

1. Use toddler or training toothpaste that's okay to swallow. Toddlers may not understand how to spit out their toothpaste at first, so use a non-fluoride toothpaste that's safe to swallow.
2. Use toothpaste in fun colors and flavoring. Make the teeth brushing routine more exciting by letting your children use toothpaste that comes in a decorated tube, is a fun color or sparkles, and maybe even tastes like gum or candy.
3. Use a small amount of toothpaste so their mouths don't get filled up with froth. Your kids' mouths are smaller than yours, so they won't need as much toothpaste as you do, either.
4. Keep kids on a regular schedule. Make it easier for your kids to remember to brush their teeth every morning and before bed by setting a regular routine, such as brushing teeth after eating and before washing their faces or changing clothes.

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This information was researched by staff of RFECY and is adapted from 10 ricks to Make Your Kids LOVE Brushing Their Teeth! by Tara Miller
<http://www.wonderbaby.org/parenting/articles/brush-teeth.html>

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5. Use flossers when teaching kids how to floss. Use the little hand-held floss sticks until kids understand how to floss properly.
6. Take your kids to the dentist at an early age. Around the age of three, take your child to the dentist to teach them about dental hygiene and to make sure they don't have any oral health problems.
7. Buy an electric toothbrush for older kids:
Older kids who get bored brushing their teeth may find an electric tooth brush cool and exciting to use, especially if you use the brushes that light up or play music. If your kids are responsible enough, consider trying one out.
8. Read picture books about brushing with younger kids. Check out Sandra Boynton's Going-To-Bed Book or Elmo's Ready, Set, Brush.
9. Monitor their brushing habits. Don't just tell your kids to go to the bathroom and brush their teeth: they could be standing in the bathroom playing with the toothpaste to avoid doing it!
10. Encourage them to look at their teeth in the mirror. Get very young children used to the idea of caring for their teeth and touching their teeth by teaching them to look at the inside of their mouths in the mirror.