

Brush Up on Healthy Teeth: Simple Steps for Kids' Smiles

Learn more about keeping your child's teeth healthy with this true or false quiz.

1. T or F All children older than 6 months should receive a fluoride supplement every day.
2. T or F Parents should start cleaning their child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.
3. T or F Parents should start brushing their child's teeth with toothpaste that contains fluoride at age 3.
4. T or F Children younger than 6 years should use enough toothpaste with fluoride to cover the toothbrush.
5. T or F Parents should brush their child's teeth twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone.
6. T or F Young children should always use fluoride mouth rinses after brushing.

ANSWERS

1. **False.** Check with your child's doctor or dentist about your child's specific fluoride needs. Parents of a child older than 6 months should discuss the need for a fluoride supplement with the doctor or dentist if drinking water does not have enough fluoride to help prevent cavities.
2. **True.** Start cleaning as soon as the first tooth appears. Wipe teeth every day with a clean, damp cloth. Switch to a small, soft toothbrush as more teeth come in.
3. **False.** Parents should start using toothpaste with fluoride to brush their child's teeth at age 2. Toothpaste with fluoride may be used earlier if the child's doctor or dentist recommends it.
4. **False.** Young children should use only a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride is important for fighting cavities, but if children younger than 6 years swallow too much fluoride, their permanent teeth may have white spots. Using no more than a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride can help keep this from happening.
5. **True.** Children usually do not have the skill to brush their teeth well until around age 4 or 5. Parents should brush their young child's teeth thoroughly twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone.
6. **False.** Fluoride mouth rinses have a high concentration of fluoride. Children younger than 6 years should not use fluoride mouth rinses unless the child's doctor or dentist recommends it. Young children tend to swallow rather than spit, and swallowing too much fluoride before age 6 may cause the permanent teeth to have white spots.