

Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles



Establishing a Bedtime Routine for Your Child

A regular bedtime routine helps your child know what to expect at the end of the day. Brushing your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste as soon as the first tooth appears in the mouth is an important part of the routine.



Why is setting up a bedtime routine important?

- Brushing your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste before bed removes bacteria from their teeth and prevents tooth decay (cavities). It also helps to set a toothbrushing routine that lasts a lifetime.
- Spending 15 minutes reading to your child every day can improve their language development. It can also help strengthen the bond between you and your child.
- Sleep is important for your child's health and well-being.

A bedtime routine for your child can include these simple steps:

1. **Tell your child it's time to get ready for bed.** Letting your child know it's bedtime begins the process for preparing them to relax and sleep.
2. **Brush your child's teeth.** For children under age 3, use a rice-size amount of fluoride toothpaste to brush teeth. For children ages 3 to 6, use a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste. After brushing, don't give your child anything to eat or drink before bed.

3. **Read a book with your child.** After brushing, read a book aloud to your child in a comfortable spot. As your child gets older, let them pick out a book or two to read.
4. **Put your child to bed.** After reading, put your child to sleep in their own bed.

Be consistent and patient. It may take time for your child to get used to the bedtime routine. Once the routine is set, bedtime will be calmer, quieter, and more fun for you and your child.



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