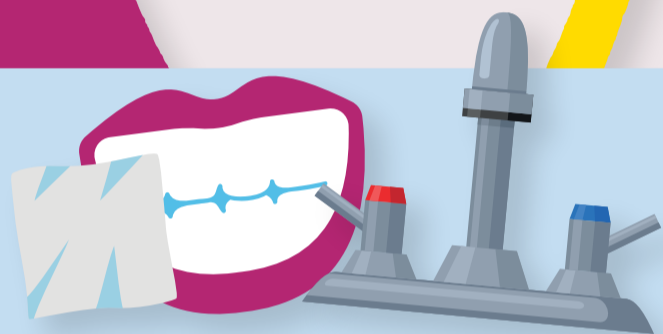


Strategies to help children cope with the sensory challenges of toothbrushing:

Does your child?

- Refuse to allow a toothbrush into his/ her mouth
- Gag or show other physical reactions to toothbrushing?

Here are some tips to help make toothbrushing a fun and tolerable experience:



Tactile tips

Desensitise your child: use a cloth and encourage them to bite down whilst you gently tug on it

If a toothbrush isn't tolerated, consider a damp cloth to wipe the teeth clean

Try toothbrushes of different sizes, handles, bristle firmness and shapes

Visual tips

Try a toothbrush that lights up or one which is a different colour

Use a sand timer

Toothbrushing chart to help keep track of daily brushing



Smell/taste tips

Try an unflavoured brand toothpaste

Try a sodium lauryl sulphate-free toothpaste for those who have difficulty swallowing

Consider a smaller quantity of toothpaste or start without using any at all



Auditory tips

Sing a familiar, short song, whilst toothbrushing

Consider using an app which plays music e.g. Brush DJ

Try a toothbrush that sings

Practical strategies

Ensure it is a comfortable environment

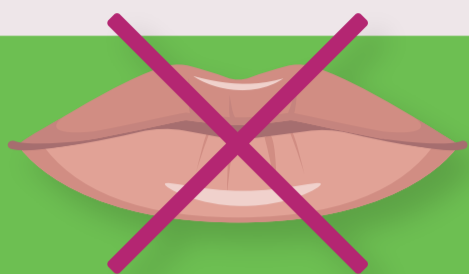
Make tooth brushing a game - attack of the bugs!

Keep it fun



Strategies to help children cope with the sensory challenges of toothbrushing:

Top Tips - if your child is:



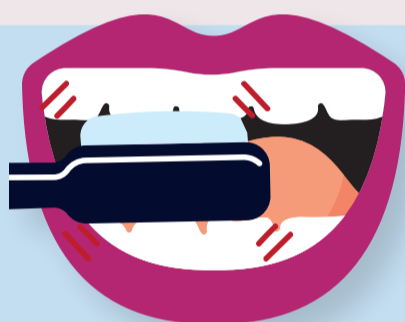
Refusing to open mouth:

- Approach slowly
- Allow to explore texture of bristles of toothbrush with fingers
- Prompt by gently touching lips with toothbrush or some toothpaste



Turns away when approaching for toothbrushing:

- Reposition yourself to the direction which they are turning
- Use your finger to stroke their cheek towards the direction of the mouth



Biting the toothbrush:

- Use two toothbrushes – one for biting, one for brushing
- Use a foam mouth prop to help keep the mouth open



Unable to spit:

- Dampen the toothbrush in mouthwash or use a smear of non foaming toothpaste
- Ensure the child is sat up
- Use gauze to remove excess fluid or use a suction toothbrush



Not letting go of the toothbrush:

- Hand-on-hand technique to guide them into the right place
- Gently stroke forearm to distract



Looks distressed/ exhibiting challenging behaviour during toothbrushing:

- Stop
- Re-evaluate technique
- Consider help from another person
- Re-attempt at a different time
- If it happens repeatedly, seek assistance from the oral healthcare team

