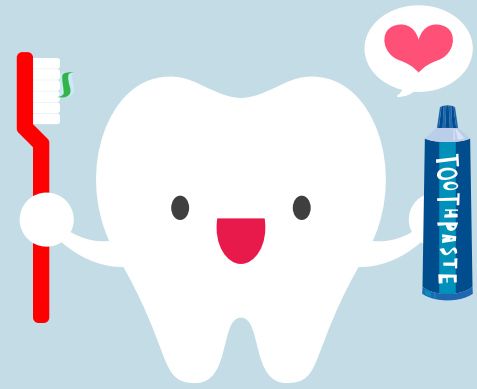


Brushing Your Child's Teeth



Brushing your child's teeth can be a struggle, but there are simple tips and tricks to make the process easier for everyone.

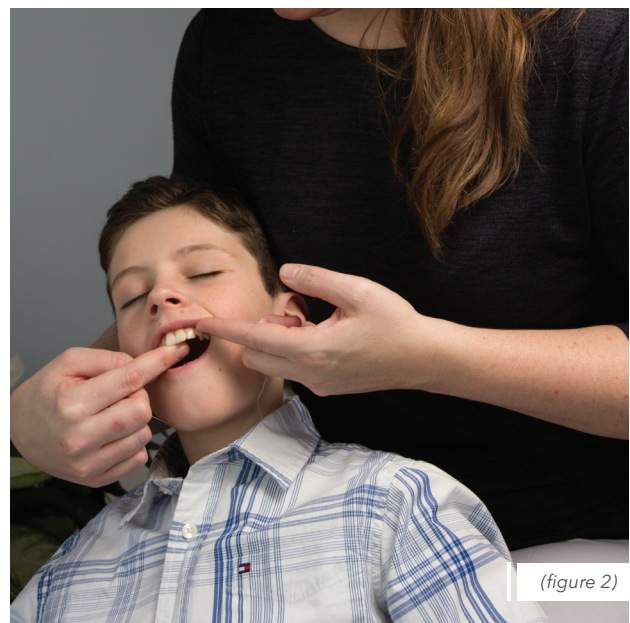
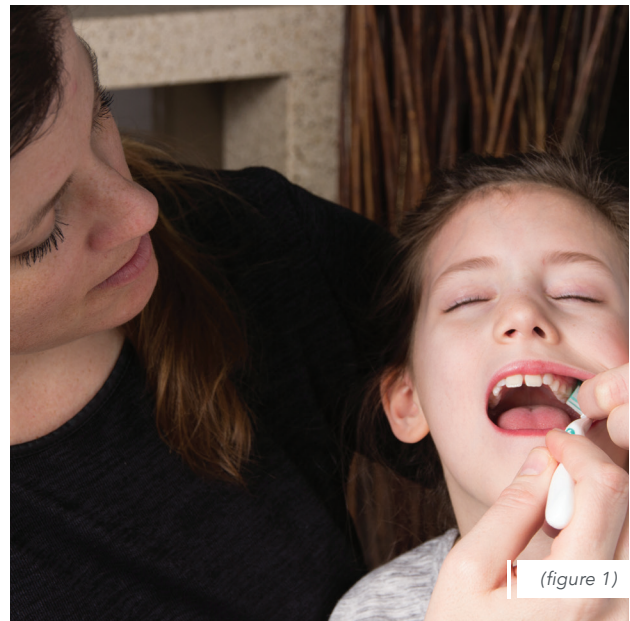
Get into position

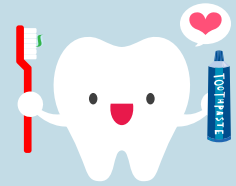
Use a position that prevents your child from wiggling while giving you a free hand to move their lips or cheeks so you can see. Here are some proven positions that work:

Attack plaque from the back!

- Stand behind rather than in front of your child (you may have to get down on one knee).
- Have your child tilt his or her chin up and look at the sky.
- Rest your child's head against your shoulder or against your upper arm.
- Place your arms on either side of your child's head.
- Use the hand not holding the toothbrush to pull back your child's lips or cheek so you can see (*figure 1*).

As your child grows, you may find it easier to sit on a chair or couch and have your child sit on the floor between your legs, with his or her head tilted back (*figure 2*).





Knee to knee is hassle-free

If your child is very young or uncooperative, you may wish to have another person help you. Together, you can use the knee-to-knee technique (*figure 3*).

- Sit on a chair facing another seated adult, with your knees touching.
- Position your child on your lap, facing you, with their legs around your waist.
- Lay your child down on your lap, hold his or her hands, and maintain eye contact and conversation.
- Have the other adult brush the child's teeth.



It's all about the technique

A healthy mouth depends on proper toothbrushing technique. Here are some helpful tips:

- Use a small, soft toothbrush that can easily reach to the back of your child's mouth.
- Place a small amount of fluoridated toothpaste on the brush (the size of a grain of rice for very young children under the age of three or the size of a green pea for older children).
- Brush all surfaces of all teeth.
- If your child is uncooperative, use short back-and-forth strokes or small circles when you brush.
- With very cooperative children, you may wish to use a sweeping motion, starting from the gumline and brushing away from the gums in the direction that the teeth grow (*figure 4*). Remember to brush both the cheek and tongue surfaces of the teeth.
- Next brush back and forth on the biting surfaces of the back teeth.
- Use your fingers to move the lips and cheeks so you can see what you are doing (*figure 5*).



Two minutes, twice a day, the right way
Keeping your child's teeth healthy starts at home