

Oral hygiene for infants is critical while growing up

By Victoria Nampala

While most babies do not grow teeth until they are six months old, oral hygiene for babies is critical right from the beginning.

Experts advise that before even a baby grows teeth, their gums need to be cleaned.

According to Dr Steven Mugabi, a dentist at Code Clinic in Kamwokya, Kampala, when cleaning an infant's mouth, the parent should place the baby on their lap with its head close to the parent's chest so that he or she can look directly into the

child's mouth.

The parent should use a clean piece of cotton wool or cloth that has been made wet with salty warm water and rub it gently on the baby's gum.

Toothbrush

As the child grows teeth,

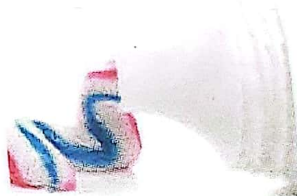
a parent can introduce a tooth brush, but it should be soft to avoid injuring the child's gum. "There are tooth brushes specifically made for infants and they are sold in many shops and supermarkets," Mugabi says.

Mugabi advises that a small amount of toothpaste (the size of a pea) should be used when cleaning a child's mouth.

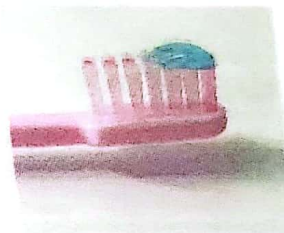
If a parent detects anything unusual, such as unusual colour of teeth, swellings on the tongue or wounds, they are advised to seek medical advice.



Cotton wool



Toothpaste



Soft tooth brush

Frequently asked questions

Q Can teething make a child sick?

A Most experts agree that while localised soreness and pain may occur, teething does not cause symptoms elsewhere in the body, like rash, vomiting and diarrhoea. Consult your family doctor if your baby is vomiting or has any other severe symptoms. And do not try to treat your child yourself.

Q What are the common signs of teething?

A

- Drooling
- Swollen, bulging gums.
- A tooth visible below the gum
- Irritability
 - Trouble sleeping
- Trying to bite, chew and suck on everything
- Rubbing her face
- Rejecting food

Q When should children start using toothpaste?

A Do not use fluoridated toothpaste until the age of three. Earlier than that, clean your child's teeth with water and a soft-bristled toothbrush. After the age of three, parents should supervise brushing. Use no more than a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and ensure children do not swallow excess toothpaste.

Online sources



Babies chew on things when the teeth are growing