

25 IDEAS TO MAKE BRUSHING MORE FUN FOR YOUR CHILD

1. Sing a silly song as you brush. Try singing the following to the tune of *Row Your Boat*: "Brush, brush, brush your teeth. Brush them everyday. Brush them up and brush them down to keep away decay." Or make up your own song!
2. Reinforce good brushing behavior by saying, "Wonderful job opening your mouth for brushing."
3. Clap and celebrate when you finish: "Yeah! The sugar bugs are all gone!"
4. Use two toothbrushes. Let your child choose which one they want to hold, and you use the other one to brush.
5. Brush for less time, but better quality. At age 12 months, it may take only 10 seconds to get every tooth surface.
6. Wet the toothbrush first. It softens the bristles.
7. Under age three, use non-fluoride toothpaste if your child likes it better. If your child doesn't like it, just use water. The non-fluoride toothpaste is only a training paste. Only use it if it makes your life easier.
8. Try standing behind your child while they are lying down on the bed or changing table. You have the same view a dentist does.
9. Try standing up.
10. Try brushing while your child is playing in the bathtub.
11. Give your child a choice of different color toothbrush every night, even if they always choose the same choice.
12. Give your child a fist bump, high five, or big hug after every brushing.
13. Try a toothbrush that plays music.
14. Have your child watch you brush.
15. Have your child watch an older sibling brush.
16. Make up a brushing dance to celebrate after every brushing.
17. Use a spinning toothbrush with supervision. Even if it is just for distraction while you brush with a normal toothbrush.
18. You can start with a toothbrush when the first tooth appears, but if you want to delay it, you can use a washcloth with purposeful scrubbing if your child still only has front teeth. Switch to a toothbrush once back teeth show up.
19. Have one parent brush the teeth while another is distracting them reading a book.
20. Keep the same routine every night.
21. Make a gold star chart. Give a star for being a "good helper" brushing teeth. Load up on small garage sale toys, keep a secret stash, and use them as a reward after a certain number of gold stars.
22. Have multiple flavors of toothpaste to give your child choices.
23. If your child complains the toothpaste is "too spicy," try a toothpaste that contains xylitol instead of saccharin.
24. Give your child time to brush their teeth on their own. Then say, "My Turn!" and make sure you get each tooth surface.
25. Make the toothbrush into a "Superhero" fighting off the sugar bugs.

For more tips on keeping your kids cavity free visit www.TheDentistDad.com