

Toothbrushing Guidelines



Keeping the mouth clean is an important aspect of overall health. Child care centres can contribute to a child's well-being by conducting daily brushing programs. It is equally important to clean brushes and maintain storage containers in a sanitary manner to prevent transmission of disease-causing germs, which can lead to illnesses.

Toothbrush:

- small enough to fit behind the lower front teeth
- soft bristles
- replace approximately every three months or earlier if bristles become worn or bent, during and after an outbreak, or if toothbrush falls on the floor
- each individual should have their own labelled toothbrush (e.g. use permanent marker to record child's name on brush handle then seal with clear nail polish)
- unlabelled toothbrushes that are mixed up must be discarded



Storage Unit:

- toothbrushes must not touch each other; spacing of two inches or more is preferable
- made of durable material that is non-porous and washable
- store away from the sink area to avoid toothbrushes from being splashed and out of children's reach
- designed so that users can access the toothbrush handles easily



Recommended Procedures:

1. Supervision by a staff member
2. Ask child to wash his/her hands before toothbrushing
3. Do not use toothpaste until the child is able to spit it out. If the child is unable to spit use water only
 - fluoridated toothpaste is recommended; store out of reach of children; child should not eat or swallow the toothpaste
 - if toothpaste is used, dispense no more than a pea sized amount onto a clean, single-use paper; apply the dispensed paste onto toothbrush; discard used paper
 - after brushing, have child rinse his/her mouth with water and spit; use single-use disposable cups
4. Staff to rinse toothbrush thoroughly before putting it back into storage unit; let toothbrush air dry
5. Ask child to wash his/her hands after toothbrushing
6. After brushing is finished, staff member cleans and disinfects sink(s)
7. Clean and disinfect toothbrush storage unit/device weekly, or more often as necessary*

* Circumstances may vary. Please consult with your Public Health Inspector.



Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/childcare

