



ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

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Tips and Tricks: **Reluctant Toothbrusher**



Having clean teeth is as essential to overall health as a clean diaper and regular use of a car seat. Most children have times when they resist brushing, but families of children with special needs may find that daily oral care requires more time and patience to ensure that teeth and gums remain healthy. When children struggle with brushing, here are some tips to try.

Teach Your Child What to Expect

- Allow your child to watch you brush
- Talk with your child about why you brush your teeth
- Give your child a toothbrush without toothpaste to use while you brush
- Show your child a picture of a child brushing teeth



Be Consistent

- Make toothbrushing part of your child's expected practice in the morning and just before bed each night.
- Help with brushing until your child is 8 years old.
- Use the correct amount of toothpaste for their age (a smear until age three and a small pea size from age 3); too much can cause gagging.
- Most children find mint flavored adult toothpaste too "hot". Experiment with different types of children's toothpaste with fluoride to find their favorites.



Make it Fun

- Each time they brush, let your child choose the toothbrush and toothpaste used.
- Be creative: Sing new songs, tell new stories, use a sand timer, count to five for each tooth.
- Be flexible: Brush in different places in your home (or on your lap). No need to rinse.

Download **Beating Brushing Battles** for a list of ideas to make tooth brushing time fun!

oralhealthkansas.org/pdf/Beating%20Brushing%20Battles-English.pdf