

Caries Prevention Reminder by Age

The following tables are for members of the dental team to refer to in practice. They provide a comprehensive reminder of preventive measures that are suited to children based on their age.

When a child attends for dental care, refer to the page that corresponds to the child's age for a comprehensive reminder of the preventive measures that are suited to children of that age.

Standard Prevention for ALL children

Enhanced Prevention for children assessed as at increased caries risk

Many of these interventions are applicable to children of all ages while others are age-specific.

Further information is provided in the full SDCEP guidance '*Prevention and Management of Dental Caries in Children*' available at www.scottishdental.org/cep.

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 0–1 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Bring to attention risk areas	Erupting teeth	
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting Health Visitor for support
Toothbrushing	Hands on brushing instruction early during the child's care Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Brush as soon as teeth erupt • Use a smear of 1000 ppm fluoride paste • Adult supervision 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not place fruit juices, sweetened milk or soy formula milk in feeding bottles • Nothing after brushing at night 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of action planning Enquire about feeding patterns

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 1–2 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Bring to attention risk areas	Erupting Ds and Cs	
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting Health Visitor for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Hands on brushing instruction early during the child's care if not given previously Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Brush as soon as teeth erupt • Use a smear of 1000 ppm fluoride paste • Adult supervision 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or full-fat milk between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 2–3 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Bring to attention risk areas	Newly erupted Es	
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting Health Visitor for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Hands on brushing instruction early during the child's care if not given previously Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use a smear of 1000 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Adult supervision 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk between meals (may now drink semi-skimmed milk) • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 3–4 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Hands on brushing instruction early during the child's care if not given previously Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use a pea-sized amount of 1000 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Adult supervision 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider recommending 1350-1500 ppm fluoride toothpaste
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk between meals (may now drink semi-skimmed milk) • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 4–5 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Radiographs		Consider taking initial bitewing radiographs
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting Health Visitor for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Hands on brushing instruction early during the child's care if not given previously <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice at least once per year: • 2 minutes twice daily • Use a pea-sized amount of 1000 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Adult supervision 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider recommending 1350-1500 ppm fluoride toothpaste Consider advising parent/carer to floss DE contacts
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk between meals (may now drink semi-skimmed milk) • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year
Fissure sealants		Consider fissure sealing Es if cooperative Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 5–6 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Bring to attention risk areas	Newly erupted 6s	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use a pea-sized amount of 1000 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Adult supervision • Brush 6s laterally • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider recommending 1350-1500 ppm fluoride toothpaste Consider advising parent/carer to floss DE and 6E contacts
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal all pits and fissures of 6s Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated Consider temporary GIC sealants for partially erupted 6s

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 6–7 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Bring to attention risk areas	Newly erupted 6s and incisors	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use a pea-sized amount of 1000 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Adult supervision • Brush 6s laterally • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider recommending 1350-1500 ppm fluoride toothpaste Consider advising parent/carer to floss DE and 6E contacts
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal all pits and fissures of 6s Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated Consider temporary GIC sealants for partially erupted 6s

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 7–8 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Parent/carer's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Bring to attention risk areas	Erupting incisors	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use 1350-1500 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Adult supervision • Brush 6s laterally • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider advising parent/carer to floss DE and 6E contacts
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year Consider the use of alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal pits and fissures of all permanent teeth Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated Consider temporary GIC sealants for partially erupted 6s

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 8–9 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Child's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Occlusion	Consider prognosis of 6s and position of 3s	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use 1350-1500 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider recommending floss wands for the 6E contact if radiographs show early approximal caries on 6s
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year Consider the use of alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal pits and fissures of all permanent teeth Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 9–10 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Child's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Occlusion	Consider prognosis of 6s and position of 3s	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use 1350-1500 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider recommending floss wands for the 6E contacts if radiographs show early approximal caries on 6s
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year Consider the use of alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal pits and fissures of all permanent teeth Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 10–11 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Child's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Occlusion	Consider necessity for ortho referral	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use 1350-1500 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider prescribing 2800 ppm fluoride toothpaste Consider recommending floss wands for the 6E contacts if radiographs show early approximal caries on 6s
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year Consider the use of alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal pits and fissures of all permanent teeth Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 11–12 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Child's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Caries risk	
Bring to attention risk areas	Newly erupted 7s	
Occlusion	Consider necessity for ortho referral	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use 1350-1500 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Brush 7s laterally • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider prescribing 2800 ppm fluoride toothpaste Consider recommending floss wands for 6E contact if radiographs show early approximal caries on 6s
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year Consider the use of alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal pits and fissures of all permanent teeth, including 7s Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated Consider temporary GIC sealants for partially erupted

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 12–13 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Child's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Changing caries risk Signs of erosion	
Bring to attention risk areas	Newly erupted 7s	
Occlusion	Consider necessity for ortho referral	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use 1350-1500 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Brush 7s laterally • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider prescribing 2800 ppm fluoride toothpaste Consider recommending floss wands for 6E contacts if radiographs show early approximal caries on 6s
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year Consider the use of alcohol-free fluoride mouthwash
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal pits and fissures of all permanent teeth, including 7s Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated Consider temporary GIC sealants for partially erupted 7s

Caries Prevention Reminder: Age 13–16 years		
	Standard Prevention For all children	Enhanced Prevention For children assessed as at increased caries risk, in addition to Standard Prevention
Assess	Child's ability and motivation Brushing practice Diet Changing caries risk Signs of erosion	
Occlusion	Consider necessity for ortho referral	
Radiographs	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 12-18 months	Bitewing radiographs, if not taken in previous 6-12 months
Motivation	Consider use of action planning	Consider contacting School Nurse for support Consider possible dental neglect
Toothbrushing	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 minutes twice daily • Use 1350-1500 ppm fluoride paste • Spit, don't rinse • Brush 7s laterally • Hands on brushing instruction if not given previously 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Hands on brushing instruction at least once a year Consider free brush and paste Consider toothbrushing charts Consider disclosing Consider prescribing 2800 ppm fluoride toothpaste Consider recommending floss wands for 6E contacts if radiographs show early approximal caries on 6s
Diet	Provide advice at least once per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict sugar to no more than 4 times per day • Drink only water or milk (preferably semi-skimmed or skimmed) between meals • Sugar-free snacks only • Nothing after brushing at night • Be aware of hidden sugars in food • Be aware of acid content of drinks 	Provide Standard Prevention advice at each recall Motivate and be positive and supportive Consider use of diet diaries Consider use of action planning
Topical fluorides	Apply fluoride varnish 2 times per year	Apply fluoride varnish an additional 1-2 times per year Consider the use of alcohol-free fluoride mouthwashes
Fissure sealants		Fissure seal pits and fissures of all permanent teeth, including 7s Monitor existing sealants and top up if indicated Consider temporary GIC sealants for partially erupted 7s