



Scan to read online

Newsletter Articles

How to choose the right Kid's toothpaste.



How to Choose the Right Kids' Toothpaste

Donna McMahon and Brittany Kidd - Registered Oral Health Therapists - Teaching Teeth

So, you find yourself standing in the dental aisle of your local supermarket, staring helplessly at the array of products on display. It's as overwhelming as your first trip to a baby shop (we've been there, it's daunting). Among products you never knew you needed and ingredients you can't pronounce, there are 50 different brands claiming to be indispensable. Now what? How do you make the right choice—one that's best for your child, with good ingredients they'll actually use, and that fits your budget? We understand your dilemma and have simplified it so you don't have to stress. Plus, you can use our Amelo quiz and product finder for additional help!

Let's start with the ingredients to look for. The toothpaste you choose will depend heavily on whether you prefer fluoride or non-fluoride options and the ages of your children. First and foremost, fluoride is our top recommendation. It's a crucial ingredient that repairs tooth structure, strengthens enamel against cavities, and inhibits plaque formation. It's truly a dental superhero. However, if your preference is fluoride-free, we suggest looking for toothpastes containing hydroxyapatite and xylitol. Hydroxyapatite is a key mineral in tooth structure, while xylitol prevents plaque buildup. Be aware that these options won't protect teeth against dietary risks and the challenging oral hygiene routines of young children. Toothpaste lacking fluoride or hydroxyapatite only aids in plaque removal and won't strengthen teeth.

Now, why does age matter when it comes to toothpaste? Essentially, age determines the fluoride concentration. Adult toothpaste (for ages 6 years and up) typically contains about 1000-1400ppm fluoride, whereas children's toothpaste (ages 0-6 years) has around 500ppm fluoride. The lower fluoride content in children's toothpaste accounts for the likelihood that young children may swallow some toothpaste instead of spitting it out, minimizing any potential adverse effects. Children's toothpaste may be marketed for specific age brackets like 0-3 years and 3-6 years, but as long as it contains approximately 500ppm fluoride, it is safe for young children. Fluoride levels are usually listed on the packaging (Amelo software also provides this information and recommends suitable options, pretty smart, right?).

Interestingly, many children end up using too much toothpaste, not because of the fluoride content but due to the amount they squeeze onto their brush. We've all seen those ads with a toothbrush overloaded with more toothpaste than needed! Children aged 0-3 years only need a tiny smear the size of a grain of rice, while those aged 3-6 should use a pea-sized amount (both using children's toothpaste). Adults need only a pea-sized amount of adult toothpaste.

Now, onto the abundance of brands and flavours, let's face it, anything that prevents a wrestling match or a bathroom safari with your child is a winner. Brands and flavours aren't critical as long as the toothpaste contains the recommended ingredients. Many children enjoy mint flavour, but some find it too "spicy," and this is common among adults too! If mint isn't a hit with your child, consider trying a different flavour. Toothpaste flavours can turn nightly brushing into a party! Bubble gum, strawberry, watermelon, or even unicorn confetti, the choices are endless.

And let's not forget the power of your child's favourite characters, as they can make brushing teeth exciting. If your child's preferred character isn't on a toothpaste tube, add some stickers for instant character toothpaste!

Lastly, consider texture—gels, pastes, glitter, there's a lot to choose from. Texture can make a difference in your child's toothpaste experience. Whether smooth and creamy or gel-like and squishy, let your child explore and decide what they prefer. Just steer clear of sodium lauryl sulphate, a foaming agent best avoided.

Choosing the right toothpaste for your child should be an adventure filled with flavours, colours, and imagination. Involve your child in the decision-making process to ensure they get a toothpaste they love, and transform brushing into a fun and engaging daily activity. Let your child's personality shine through their toothpaste choice, and enjoy seeing their smile light up every day!

Here's to happy brushing and healthy smiles!

References:

Marinho VCC, Higgins JPT, Sheiham A, Logan S (2003a). Fluoride toothpastes for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 1

Marinho VC, Higgins JP, Logan S, Sheiham A (2003b). Topical fluoride (toothpastes, mouthrinses, gels or varnishes) for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 4

Marinho VC, Higgins JP, Sheiham A, Logan S (2004a). One topical fluoride (toothpastes, or mouthrinses, or gels, or varnishes) vs. another for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 1

Marinho VC, Higgins JP, Sheiham A, Logan S (2004b). Combinations of topical fluoride (toothpastes, mouthrinses, gels, varnishes) vs. single topical fluoride for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 1

Söderling, E. and Pienihäkkinen, K., (2022). Effects of xylitol chewing gum and candies on the accumulation of dental plaque: a systematic review. Clinical oral investigations, pp.1-11