

For times when toothbrushing is impossible

A chlorhexidine spray or mouthwash may be used to help reduce plaque bacteria as a short term alternative to brushing.

Wrap some gauze soaked in chlorhexidine mouthwash around a gloved finger and gently wipe your child's mouth and tongue.

Useful information

Local Community Pharmacy - Your local community pharmacies offer a wide range of services including information and general advice on symptom relief medicines as well as a prescription collection and delivery service.

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.



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Community Dental Service

**When toothbrushing is difficult - advice
for parents and carers of children with
additional needs**



Advice when children gag, retch or clamp

- Changing your child's body position, brushing at a different time of day or using a smaller toothbrush may help to reduce these problems
- Start brushing from the front and clean as much at the back of the mouth as your child will allow



- If your child clamps on the toothbrush leave it as a prop and use a second toothbrush to clean all the teeth you can reach



- Applying gentle pressure with a finger on your child's chin just below the lower lip can reduce the gag reflex in some children.

A strong tongue or tight lips

- Massaging your child's lips and cheeks before brushing may relax them
- A clean cotton handkerchief wrapped around your forefinger may be used to gently retract or hold back your child's tongue / lips.

Mouth sensitivity and swallowing difficulties

Mouth sensitivities

- Massage around the mouth and cheeks to improve muscle tone, mobility and saliva flow, and to desensitise the area
- Gradually introduce a small, soft toothbrush to reduce hypersensitivity ready for proper brushing. A non-flavoured toothpaste may be preferable for children who dislike the taste of regular toothpaste
- Play activities can help mouth function, for example, blowing instruments or using a straw. Ask your child's occupational therapist or speech and language therapist for advice.

Swallowing difficulties

- Tilt your child's head forwards to help prevent aspiration when toothbrushing
- Use a non / low foaming toothpaste (the dentist can advise which one is best for your child)
- An aspirating toothbrush which is attached to suction may be needed.

Grinding

This problem is very difficult to stop and can lead to tooth wear.

However, massaging the mouth and cheeks using a finger for relaxation may help. Your dentist can also give advice on the use of mouth guards.