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## Sensory Strategies for Tooth Brushing

Tooth brushing is a very sensory experience and some children can find the different textures and tastes really challenging. There are a few things you can try to prepare your child for tooth brushing which may make the experience a bit easier to tolerate.



### Preparing your child for tooth brushing

- If your child likes deep pressure, try some bear hugs or squeezes before brushing.
- Massage around your child's cheeks moving towards their lips.
- Use a facecloth to wipe the inside your child's mouth along their teeth and gums before brushing.
- Try providing some oral stimulation with a finger toothbrush or z-vibe before brushing to help decrease sensitivity.

### General Strategies

- Using a visual schedule will help your child to anticipate and understand what will happen.
- Use a mirror so your child can see what is happening.
- Try a dimmer switch on the bathroom light, this will help to reduce the light bouncing off the different surfaces.
- A visual timer for the duration of the brushing will help your child understand that it will come to an end, e.g. Disney Magic Timer app
- Try playing music through headphones to distract from the sounds of the toothbrushing, the Brush DJ app is great! Alternatively you could use noise cancelling headphones.
- Use warm water to rinse instead of cold.
- Try different flavoured toothpastes, or even a flavourless toothpaste such as Oranurse which is also non-foaming.
- Use only smear of toothpaste to start and build up to a pea-sized amount.

### How to brush your teeth



### What type of brush should my child use?

You may need to try different types of brushes with your child as they will all feel different and some will be tolerated better than others:

- Try a Nuk brush initially before moving onto bristles.
- Soft bristles are sometimes tolerated better than hard.
- A 3 sided brush will get the job done much quicker.
- Try an electric toothbrush instead of normal brush as some children can find the vibrations calming.



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## Useful Resources

### Oranurse Toothpaste (from £6.49)

This toothpaste is specially formulated for people sensitive to strong flavours. It has 1450ppm fluoride and is SLS free (non-foaming)



### NUK Training toothbrush set (from £4.99)

Helps children to learn to brush their teeth. Set includes 2 x brushes – a cleaning trainer and a brushing trainer. Cleaning trainer is designed to be chewed and gently cleans and massages the gums and palate. Brushing trainer helps children get used to a toothbrush and gently cleans their first teeth. Comes with a protective ring / toothbrush stand



### Ark Z-Vibe Oral Stimulator (from £30.95)

Smooth, gentle vibration helps "wake up" the mouth and increase oral awareness. Textured probe tip provides tactile input to help normalize sensitivities. Sleek, lightweight, textured handle, specially designed to provide targeted tactile cues and sensory stimulation within and around the oral cavity.



### Brush Buddies finger toothbrush (from £2.98)

Massages tender gums and cleans new teeth. 100% Silicone - BPA, Lead & Phthalate Free. Dual sided with brush or massaging bumps.



### Dentrust 3-sided soft brush (from £9.99)

The unique design makes it useful for children with limited movement as it guides the brush-stroke, helping them brush correctly and independently. For parents who help with brushing but only get ten seconds or so to work with a brush in their children's mouths, you can get maximum brushing effectiveness in minimal time as the whole tooth is being cleaned, not just one side at a time.





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## Useful Tooth Brushing Apps



### **Brush DJ**

Brush DJ plays 2 minutes of music which users can choose from their own music libraries. The app also allows you to set daily reminders to brush your teeth as well as reminders to visit your dentist.



### **Disney Magic Timer**

This visual timer app uses an animated toothbrush to encourage children to brush for longer by slowly revealing a Disney picture as the time goes on. Children can also scan their Oral B products, choose characters and earn stickers.



### **Brush Up: Toothbrush Training**

Brush Up uses a character Budd to direct children whilst brushing their teeth. Children can see themselves on the screen next to Budd whilst they are brushing and earn 'rewards' with their selfie assessments.



### **Aquafresh Brush Time**

Captain Aquafresh and the Nurdles encourage children to brush their teeth by singing and dancing along to 2 minutes of brush time. The whole family can be involved with up to 4 user profiles.



### **Colgate Magik**

This app works in conjunction with the Colgate Magik toothbrush to detect how a child brushes their teeth. Children can keep track of their brushing habits and use augmented reality to make brushing more fun.