

WHICH TOOTHPASTE IS IDEAL FOR CHILDREN?

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ABSTRACT

Selection of an ideal toothpaste for their child becomes a conundrum for parents. This is a guideline on the specifications and recommendations of toothpaste and its contents as per standard guidelines.

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Sir,

With the rise in toothpastes sold in the market, one may find it overwhelming to choose from dozens of products with alluring marketing strategies targeted at children with their favourite cartoon characters, appealing designs, and questionable cost.

An ideal toothpaste for a child should have a mild flavour, no abrasive agents (marketed as whitening agents), should be cariostatic, antibacterial, should facilitate removal of plaque and thus maintain an optimal periodontal health. However, the magic ingredient to make the perfect toothpaste for a child is fluoride.

The action of introducing low levels of fluoride via tooth brushing is one of the most effective oral hygiene practices. The availability of fluoride in topical forms (e.g., toothpastes) makes it even more effective in re-mineralization of enamel and also prevents further demineralization.

The European Academy of Paediatric Dentistry (EAPD) recommends brushing twice daily using a rice grain size (0.125 grams) 500 ppm (parts per million) of fluoridated toothpaste for children younger than 24 months. The concentration increases to 1000 ppm of fluoride (pea size; 0.25 grams) in children between two and six years of age. Children six years and older are recommended to use 1-2 cm length of 1450 ppm fluoride toothpaste (length of the brush; 0.5-1.0 grams) twice daily.¹

Reference

1. Toumba, K.J., Twetman, S., Splieth, C. *et al.* Guidelines on the use of fluoride for caries prevention in children: an updated EAPD policy document. *Eur Arch Paediatr Dent* 20, 507–516 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40368-019-00464-2>

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