

News story: Every 10 minutes a child in England has a rotten tooth removed

A child in England has a tooth removed in hospital every 10 minutes due to preventable tooth decay, according to data published by Public Health England (PHE) today, Friday 6 April 2018.

With the government's [Soft Drinks Industry Levy](#) coming into effect today, PHE's [Change4Life campaign](#) is reminding parents that sugary drinks, including juice drinks, energy drinks, cola and other fizzy drinks, are one of the main sources of sugar in children's diets.

Consuming too much sugar is one of the leading causes of tooth decay and childhood obesity. Tooth decay can be prevented by cutting down on sugar as well as brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

Tooth extraction remains the most common reason for hospital admissions in 5 to 9 year olds. Figures show around 141 children a day – some just a year old – are having teeth removed. This means around 60,000 days are missed from school during the year, as well as causing problems with eating, sleeping and even smiling.

PHE's Change4Life campaign is encouraging parents to:

1. Swap sugary drinks for lower or no sugar alternatives, including water and lower fat milks. The [Change4Life website](#) has plenty of easy drink swaps and helpful tips for families.
2. Limit fruit juice and smoothies to a total of 150ml per day and only consume with meals – they count as a maximum of one portion of our 5 A Day.
3. Ensure children brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste (once before bedtime and once during the day) and remind them to 'spit not rinse', as rinsing washes away the protective fluoride. Brushing should start as soon as the first tooth appears and children should be supervised up to the age of 7.

Taking these steps can lead to fewer days off school and fewer trips to the dentist, although children should go as often as their dentist recommends.

Dr Sandra White, Dental Lead for Public Health England, said:

It's upsetting to see so many children admitted to hospital with tooth decay, but swapping out sugary drinks could be an easy win for busy families.

Parents can also help prevent decay by making sure their children's teeth are brushed twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and reducing how much sugar they're eating and drinking.

Parents can visit the [Change4Life website](#) for helpful swaps and tips, and download the new [Change4Life Food Scanner app](#) to see the sugar, fat, salt and calories in popular foods and drinks.

Sugar facts:

- a can of energy drink contains on average 13 cubes of sugar (based on a 500ml can)
- a can of cola contains on average 9 cubes of sugar (based on a 330ml can)
- a juice drink with added sugar contains on average 5 cubes of sugar (based on 200ml juice drink pouch)