



IT'S EASY TO  
PROTECT  
YOUR FAMILY'S  
SMILE

IT'S FREE,  
IT'S EASY, **IT'S FOR YOU!**

let's  
talk  
teeth

CALL  
**0800 TALK TEETH**  
(0800 825 583) [www.letstalkteeth.co.nz](http://www.letstalkteeth.co.nz)





let's  
talk  
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# HOW TO GIVE YOUR CHILD A HEALTHY SMILE

We all want to give our children the best start in life. We want them to grow, develop and thrive. Healthy teeth play an important role in a child's development, helping them to eat and speak properly. Nice teeth are important for self confidence later in life.

In this booklet you will find facts and advice on how to look after your child's teeth and protect their smile – for life. So please take five minutes to read the information and find out about oral health. If you have any questions or need help, just talk to us on 0800 Talk Teeth (0800 825 583).

## CONTENTS

AT YOUR SERVICE

04

FLUORIDE vs PLAQUE

05

LOOKING AFTER YOUR CHILD'S TEETH

06

FIVE TIPS FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

07

TEETH THROUGH THE AGES

08

HEALTHY FOOD. HEALTHY TEETH

09

# AT YOUR SERVICE

## THE SERVICE IS FREE

Children in New Zealand are entitled to free basic oral health services from 0 to 17 years of age, until their 18th birthday. It's important to enrol your child as early as possible into the service so that you can arrange the first check-up. Your child's first visit will usually be between their 1st and 2nd birthdays. Dental staff will let you know the timing of your appointment once you enrol.

It's easy to enrol, just call 0800 Talk Teeth (0800 825 583). We will guide you through it and send out the right forms for you to fill in. If your child is a preschooler or at primary school, fill in the forms and post them to your local oral health service. If you are unsure where this is, call us or visit [www.letstalkteeth.co.nz](http://www.letstalkteeth.co.nz)

If your child is in year 9 or above, you can choose your dentist. Simply fill in the forms and give them to your chosen dental practice.

If your dentist does not have a contract with your local District Health Board, call 0800 Talk Teeth and we will help you find a dentist near you who does.

## TEETH TUNE-UP

**Standard treatments are free and include:**

- Check-ups involve a routine examination, checking teeth for decay and looking at gums and mouth for any problems.
- X-rays are used to find tooth decay and other problems that can't be seen.
- Fluoride treatment helps make the surface of the teeth more resistant to decay.
- Fissure sealants are a thin layer of white filling, painted onto teeth that are at risk of developing tooth decay.
- Cleaning removes plaque, staining and tartar from teeth.
- Fillings are used to restore teeth that have been affected by tooth decay.
- Extractions to remove teeth that have been badly affected by tooth decay.

## REFERRAL FOR EXTRA TREATMENTS

If your child needs extra treatments, you will be referred to another oral health service provider. Many treatments will still be free, but you will need to pay for treatments such as orthodontics (which includes braces on teeth). Talk to your local oral health service about the costs and payment options.

## KEEP CHECKING

Don't wait for teeth problems; take your child for regular check-ups. Your dental therapist or dentist will let you know how often you need to take your child. Dental check-ups for young children mean that problems are recognised and treated early. Try to get an appointment for a time when your child is not tired and always be positive about dental visits. Use positive language such as "keeping your teeth healthy" and "keeping your smile beautiful".

### GET INTO ORAL HEALTH

*It's easy. It's free.  
And it's never  
too late to enrol  
your child.*





# FLUORIDE VS PLAQUE

## PLAQUE: THE DIRTY STORY

Plaque is the sticky, soft layer that forms on teeth every day. If left to build up, plaque causes tooth decay and gum disease. Bacteria in plaque reacts with sugar to produce an acid that dissolves the minerals in teeth; over time this causes cavities (holes).

Cavities can cause pain and discomfort and will eventually need dental work. Brushing with a fluoride toothpaste, a healthy diet, regular check-ups and preventive treatments provided by dental therapists and dentists help stop plaque build-up and cavities.

## PROTECTING OUR TEETH

Fluoride is an important weapon in the war against plaque. It is a natural element found in air, soil, fresh water, sea water, plants and lots of foods. Most of the fluoride we eat or drink comes from water, food and toothpaste. Fluoride in food, drink and our saliva continually washes over the teeth to help protect them.

### **FLUORIDE HELPS PROTECT OUR TEETH FROM TOOTH DECAY IN TWO MAIN WAYS:**

- IT STRENGTHENS GROWING TEETH
- IT CAN HELP FIX THE VERY EARLY STAGES OF DECAY IN ALL TEETH.



# LOOKING AFTER YOUR CHILD'S TEETH

Regular brushing helps you look and feel good and also helps prevent decay and gum disease. As soon as your child's teeth start to show, start brushing. Get your child into the habit of brushing twice a day – after breakfast and before bed. Once a child can control a pencil and begins to write (at around age five), they should be able to brush their own teeth. You'll need to supervise brushing until your child is about eight years old.



## HOW TO BRUSH

As soon as your child has teeth, they should be brushed. Use just a smear of fluoride toothpaste on a small, soft toothbrush for a child under six years and a pea-sized amount for a child six years and over. It can be difficult to brush your toddler's teeth, but keep trying because healthy teeth are important to your child's development and for the future health of their permanent teeth. You may find it easier to stand behind your child and gently tilt their head back as you brush.



## INSIDE AND OUT

Brush all around the inside surfaces, where teeth meet gums, and also the top chewing surfaces. On the front of the teeth, use tiny circles all around the outside surfaces, close to the gums.



## SPIT, DON'T RINSE

Remember to teach your child to spit out after tooth brushing. Do not rinse with water, because a small amount of fluoride toothpaste left around the teeth will help protect them.



## GET FLOSSING

Flossing cleans away plaque and bits of food from between your teeth and below the gum line. It gets to places that your brush can't reach. A child should start flossing when two teeth touch. This usually happens when the first back teeth appear. To begin with, you will have to floss your child's teeth, but they will eventually learn to do it for themselves. Floss once a day. If you are not sure how to floss, talk to your dental professional or talk to us on 0800 Talk Teeth (0800 825 583).



## CHECKING TEETH

Gently lift your child's top lip once a month to check inside their mouth. It's a quick and easy way to see whether decay is present in its early, treatable stages. Look for white spots at the gumline, particularly on the upper front teeth. Also look for discoloured areas or pieces of missing teeth. Check that gums look healthy, not puffy or bleeding. Visit your dental professional if you have any concerns. Just call 0800 Talk Teeth (0800 825 583) if you're unsure what to do next.



# FIVE TIPS FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

1  
2  
3  
4  
5

BRUSH TWICE A DAY WITH A FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE.

HAVE REGULAR DENTAL CHECK-UPS.

LIFT THE LIP EVERY MONTH AND CHECK YOUR CHILD'S TEETH AND GUMS.

CHOOSE HEALTHY SNACKS.

DRINK WATER OR MILK.

## BE POSITIVE

*Don't forget to praise your child for cleaning their teeth and having a healthy smile.*





# TEETH THROUGH THE AGES

## BABY TEETH

Once teeth break through, it's time to start brushing. Teeth appear at around six months, and by age three, your child will have their first set of teeth – 20 'baby' teeth. It's important to look after these teeth because their baby teeth hold spaces for adult teeth and guide the adult teeth into their correct position.

Decay in the first teeth can become painful and will then affect your child's eating and development. This decay can often signal that decay will develop in adult teeth. Brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, after breakfast and before bed, is the best thing you can do to prevent decay.

### BEDTIME

*Put babies to bed with a story, not a bottle. If they fall asleep with a bottle in their mouth, take it out.*



## BOTTLES & DUMMIES

Sugar in sweet drinks, fizzy drinks, fruit juice or sweetened milk can harm your child's teeth, especially at bedtime. Babies get holes in their teeth from sucking for long periods of time on bottles containing sweetened drinks or from sleeping with a bottle in their mouth. If a baby falls asleep with a bottle in their mouth, they produce less saliva to wash away the acid that causes decay. Try to use a cup for drinks rather than a bottle. Water or milk is best. Never dip your baby's dummy into anything sweet as this will almost certainly lead to tooth decay. Dummies need to be clean, free of sugary substances, safe and never shared.

## ADULT TEETH

At around six years old, the second set of teeth starts to appear. This change continues until all the adult teeth (except the wisdom teeth) have come through at around 14 years old. As teeth develop, children need to keep up the routine of brushing twice a day and regular flossing.

### DRINK WATER

*Drink a glass of water after having a sweet drink – even after having a diet drink.*

## THE TEENAGE YEARS

Teenagers go through lots of changes – starting high school, starting work, leaving home and growing up. Oral health and looking after teeth is even more important during these years. Remember to encourage your teenager to continue with regular dental check-ups, which are free up to their 18th birthday. They should carry on brushing twice a day; the most important time to brush is at night.

## SPORT AND MOUTH GUARDS

A child should wear a mouth guard when playing sport to protect their teeth and gums. If a tooth is damaged or lost, see a dental professional straight away. If a tooth is knocked out, put it back into the socket if you can. If you can't, keep the tooth moist by putting it into the child's mouth next to their cheek or in a cup of milk. Take the tooth and the child to your dentist as quickly as possible – the dentist may be able to save your child's tooth.





# HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY TEETH

## BREASTFEEDING

If possible, exclusively breastfeed your baby until they are ready for and need extra food – this will be at around six months of age. When your baby is ready, introduce them to appropriate complementary foods and continue to breastfeed until they are at least one year of age.

## TEETH-FRIENDLY FOOD

Looking after teeth isn't just about brushing. The kinds of food we eat can affect acid levels in our mouths and cause decay. The more often your child eats sweet food and drinks – such as lollies, cakes and biscuits, fruit juice and fizzy drinks – the more likely they are to get holes in their teeth.

If you give your child sweet foods and drinks, it is best to do so only occasionally (less than once a week) at meal times. Saliva is the body's natural defence against tooth decay – constantly replacing the minerals in teeth and washing away acids. To give saliva a chance to work, limit the number of times your child eats throughout the day. Eating three meals and two snacks each day is best. Give teeth a rest from sugar and try to offer healthy snacks between meals.

## TEETH FRIENDLY SNACKS

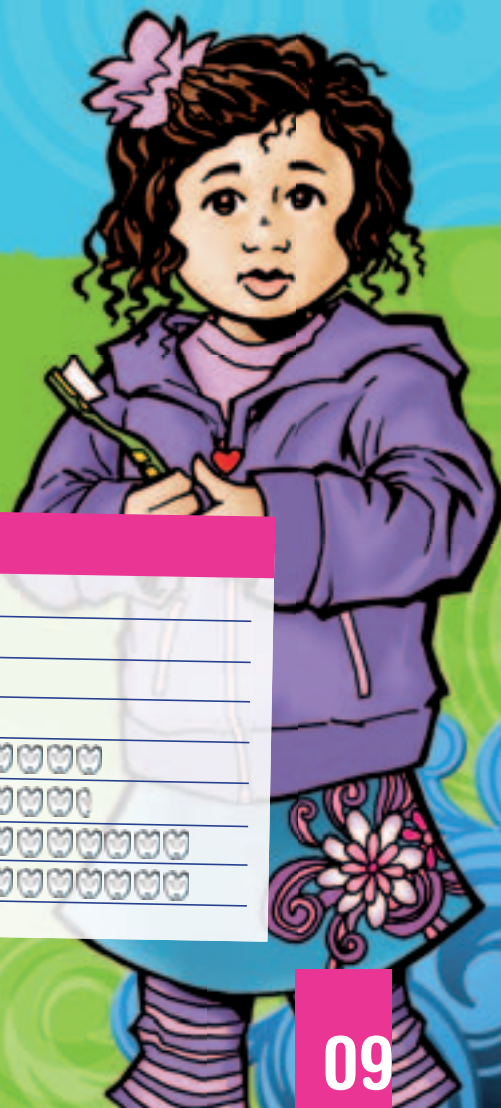
**BREAD**  
**CHEESE**  
**RAW VEGETABLES**  
**UNSWEETENED AND UNSALTED POPCORN**  
**NUTS**  
**YOGHURT**

## A GLASS OF SOMETHING

Get your child to drink a glass of water after having a sweet drink. Even though diet drinks do not contain sugar, if they are acidic, eg, a diet cola, they can cause erosion of your child's teeth. The best drinks for your child's teeth are water and milk. Most other drinks have sugar in them, although in some drinks, the sweetness is from natural sugar, eg, in pure fruit juice. Save sweet drinks for mealtimes (if at all) and use a straw. Encourage your child to choose water – it's fresh and free!

## HOW MUCH SUGAR?

DRINK	SUGAR CONTENT	
<b>WATER</b>	<b>NO SUGAR</b>	
<b>FLAVOURED WATER</b>	<b>2.5 TSP</b>	☹☹☹
<b>MILK</b>	<b>NO SUGAR</b>	
<b>CARTON FLAVOURED MILK (1 CUP/250ML)</b>	<b>3 TSP</b>	☹☹☹
<b>CARTON FRUIT JUICE (1 CUP/250ML)</b>	<b>7 TSP</b>	☹☹☹☹☹☹☹
<b>ENERGY DRINK (1 CUP/250ML CAN)</b>	<b>6 ½ TSP</b>	☹☹☹☹☹☹
<b>SPORTS DRINK (600ML BOTTLE)</b>	<b>10 TSP</b>	☹☹☹☹☹☹☹☹☹☹
<b>FIZZY DRINK (1 CAN/355ML)</b>	<b>10 TSP</b>	☹☹☹☹☹☹☹☹☹☹





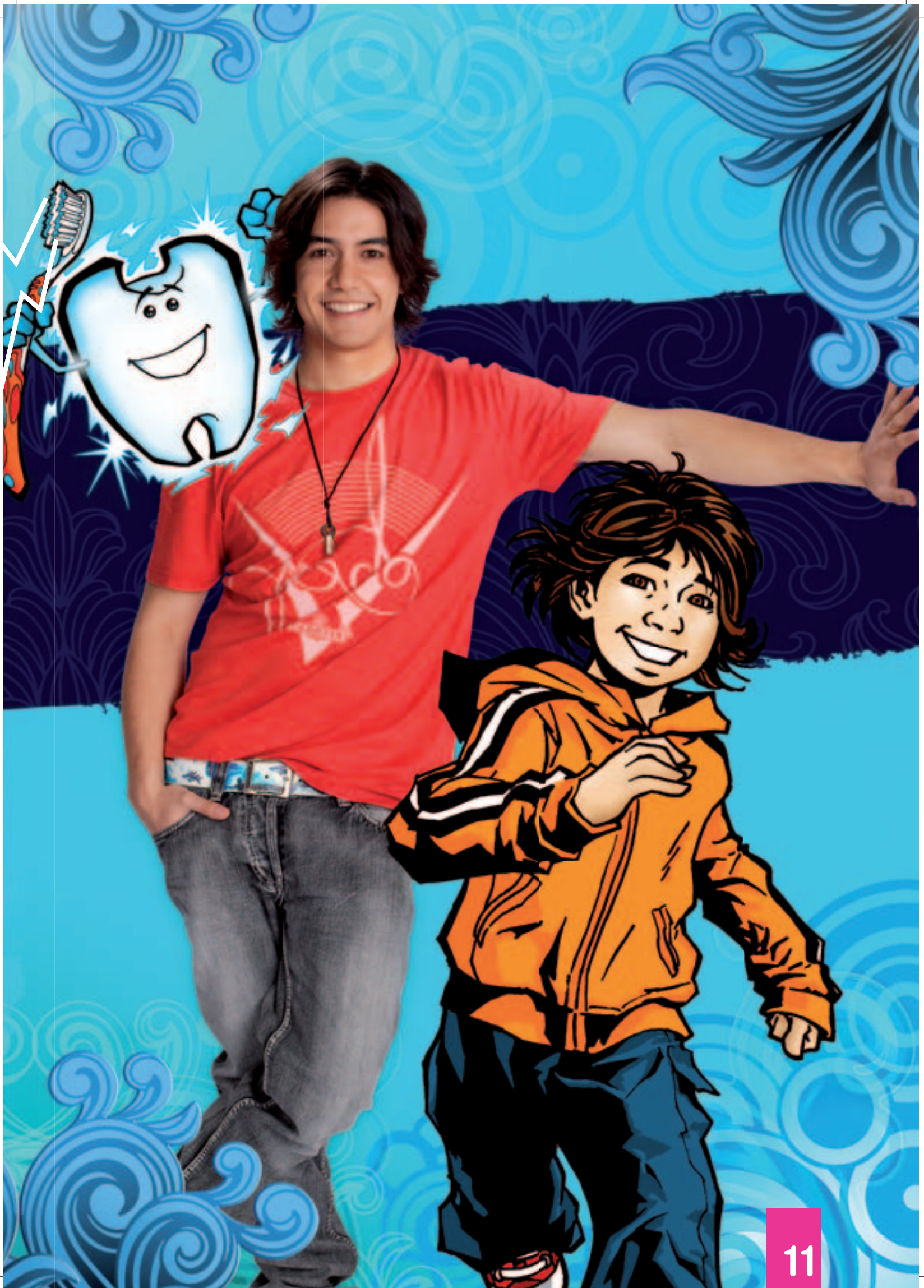
**A FREE ORAL HEALTH SERVICE  
IS IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

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IT'S EASY,

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