

## He Aratohu mō te Paraihe Niho -Toothbrushing Guidelines



### For ECE/schools to start their own daily toothbrushing programme

Toothbrushing at ECE/school supports consistent oraka niho - oral health messages and practises at kāinga - home. Good oral hygiene practices should be established at an early stage in a child's life and become an integral part of normal daily hygiene. For the toothbrushing programme to be successful all kaiako and whānau involved need to support the programme.

### Fluoride Toothpaste

Regular daily paraihe niho - toothbrushing with a fluoride toothpaste twice a day is highly effective in preventing tooth decay.

Use of fluoride toothpaste at an ECE/school includes:

- Use fluoride toothpaste as recommended by the [Ministry of Health](#).
- A smear of toothpaste is used for all tamariki 5 years and under and a pea-size for over 6 years. (Image 1)
- Where toothpaste is shared, kaiako or a pakeke – adult should put it onto a clean surface such as a plate or tray. (Image 2)
- There is enough spacing between the quantities of toothpaste to allow kaiako/pakeke to put it on the toothbrushes without cross-contamination.
- Toothpaste must only be given out at the time tamariki are ready to brush.
- Closely supervise tamariki who have their own tubes of toothpaste to use.

### Paraihe Niho - Toothbrushes

The size and shape of a toothbrush is important for brushing a child's niho - teeth correctly. A small, soft toothbrush is recommended.

- Toothbrushes are the right size for the age and ability of tamariki.
- Toothbrushes are replaced every 6 months, or sooner if required (for example, when the bristles become splayed, Image 3).
- Toothbrushes are individually identifiable (numbered) for tamariki. Clear nail polish can be used to ensure marker doesn't rub off.

### Storage system for Toothbrushes

Toothbrushes are a potential source of infection. Storage systems need to prevent cross-contamination.

Toothbrushes need to be stored in appropriate storage systems.

- Toothbrushes should stand in the upright position or in individual ventilated holders/racks.
- Storage systems should allow sufficient distance (i.e. at least 2.5cm) between toothbrushes to avoid cross-contamination.

Image 1: Amount of toothpaste

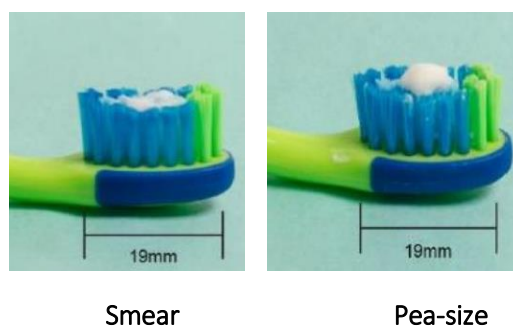


Image 2: Toothpaste on tray/plate

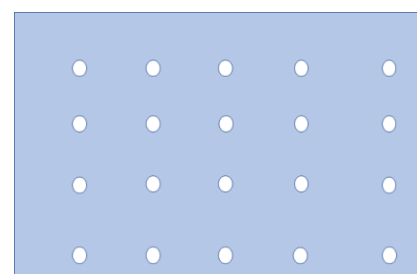
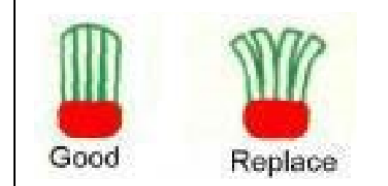


Image 3: Replacing toothbrushes



- Storage systems should display symbols or numbers that match with those on the toothbrush, so they can easily identify their toothbrush.
- Storage systems which do not have covers are stored within a specific container or in a clean, dry cupboard.
- Do not store toothbrushes in toilet areas, store away from tamariki, at adult height or in a suitable trolley.

## Toothbrushing process

- Toothbrushing takes place at a time which is most suitable for each setting.
- Kaiako/pakeke wash or sanitise hands thoroughly at the beginning and end of every toothbrushing session and as often as necessary during sessions.
- Kaiako/pakeke should cover any cuts, abrasions or breaks in their skin with a waterproof dressing.
- Tamariki are supervised when brushing their niho. It may be helpful to have a mirror in front of tamariki when brushing.
- Kaiako/pakeke dispenses toothpaste for each tamaiti onto a dishwasher-safe plate/tray or paper plate.
- Kaiako/pakeke gets toothbrush from the toothbrush rack for the tamariki
- Kaiako/pakeke picks up the toothpaste off the plate/tray with the toothbrush
- Tamariki 'dry brush' their niho for 2 minutes (i.e. brushing without water)
- After brushing is completed, tamariki carefully spit excess toothpaste/bubbles into a sink or spits/wipes mouth with a paper towel. The mouth should not be rinsed after brushing to allow some of the fluoride to remain in contact with niho.
- After toothbrushing, tamariki rinse their toothbrush thoroughly under cold running water, shakes the brush gently and gives it to the kaiako/pakeke, who puts it back into the toothbrushing rack in the appropriate slot to be air dried.
- Once the toothbrushes are air dried, the toothbrush racks are moved into a covered container or a clean, dry cupboard.
- The sink area and plates/trays used for dispensing toothpastes are washed daily with soap/detergent after each session.



## Cleaning and Prevention and Control of Infection

Appropriate cleaning procedures are in place to ensure that cross-contamination is reduced:

- Storage systems, containers, trays and storage areas are cleaned, rinsed and dried at least once a week (more if soiled) by kaiako/pakeke using warm water and soap/detergent.
- Care is taken to make sure toothbrushes do not cross-contaminate when being removed from or replaced in storage systems. While racks are being cleaned, toothbrushes are placed on a larger, clean tray or paper towels and spaced at least 2.5cm apart. Replace toothbrushes back into the clean rack and into their correct numbered slot.
- To avoid cross-contamination from saliva while toothbrushing, the storage system should not be placed directly beside the tamariki while they brush their niho.
- Storage systems are replaced if cracks, scratches or rough surfaces develop.
- Any toothbrushes dropped onto the floor are thrown out and replaced.
- Toothbrushes must not be soaked in bleach, other cleaner/disinfectant or placed in boiling water
- Tubes of toothpaste can be cleaned with a damp tissue or a clean cloth.

Ensure tamariki are enrolled with the Community Dental Service **0800 TINY TEETH** (846 983) and getting their niho checked every year [www.cdhb.health.nz/cd](http://www.cdhb.health.nz/cd).

For further information on toothbrushing and oraka niho, please visit:

[www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/teeth-and-gums](http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/teeth-and-gums)  
[www.wavesouthcanterbury.co.nz/health-topics/oraka-niho-oral-health](http://www.wavesouthcanterbury.co.nz/health-topics/oraka-niho-oral-health)  
[www.healthysmiles.org.nz](http://www.healthysmiles.org.nz)

