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# Fluoridated milk scheme information for parents

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## Fluoridated milk primary school scheme

All Blackpool primary school children from Year One upwards can have fluoridated milk, as part of the free school breakfast scheme.

### Why fluoridated milk?

- Fluoride in milk helps prevent tooth decay
- It's free – no cost to parents
- It's safe to drink

### FAQs

#### When is my child eligible for fluoridated milk?

Fluoridated milk will be offered to primary school children years 1 and upwards, as part of your child's free school breakfast scheme.

#### Why are schools offering fluoridated milk to kids?

The level of tooth decay in Blackpool is really high and lots of kids are suffering because of it. 33% of 5 year olds in Blackpool have tooth decay (the England average is 23%). Every year, around 300 kids are sent to hospital to have teeth removed. These figures are huge, and we have to do something to improve dental health in Blackpool. The scheme is part of a range of projects aimed at improving the oral health of children in Blackpool.

#### What is fluoridated milk?

Fluoridated milk is just like normal milk, except it includes a small amount of fluoride, which helps to keep kids' teeth healthy, as part of a good dental regime.

#### Is fluoridated milk safe and approved?

Yes. Fluoridated milk is safe to drink. Fluoride is a natural mineral found in water, toothpaste and mouthwash. Adding fluoride to milk makes no difference to the way it looks, smells or tastes. Its benefits have been established by the European Union and the World Health Organisation, who concluded that it contributes to maintaining tooth mineralisation.

School milk fluoridation schemes have been in operation in several countries since 1988 and a successful scheme has been operating in Manchester for over 20 years.

#### How will the scheme work?

Fluoridated milk will be offered to your child as part of the existing school breakfast scheme. There will be no additional cost to parents.

#### Will I be able to opt out?

Yes, you will be able to opt out of the scheme, and your child can still receive regular milk. If you would like to opt out, please complete the tear-off slip on the back of the leaflet and return it to your child's school.

## What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a mineral that is present in nature from many sources - from our natural water supply to tea, fish and beer.

### How does it work?

Fluoride binds calcium to your teeth, strengthening the surface enamel and preventing decay.

### Should my child still brush with fluoride toothpaste if they are drinking fluoridated milk?

Yes. A child drinking fluoridated milk should still brush their teeth twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste.

### My child takes fluoride drops or tablets. Can they have fluoridated milk?

Your child can join the scheme, but they should stop taking fluoride tablets or drops. They should not join the scheme if they are using a fluoride mouth rinse every day.

## Toothbrushing tips

- Supervise your child brushing their teeth for two minutes, twice a day (before bed, and one other time)
- Children aged 3-6 years, and adults, should use a pea-sized blob of fluoride toothpaste
- After brushing, kids should spit out excess toothpaste but not rinse with water. Rinsing will wash away the fluoride and make it less effective

Last year I carried out dental extractions, under general anaesthetic, on nearly 300 Blackpool children who had suffered from pain and infection. It is such a shame as tooth decay is preventable. Something as simple as drinking milk with fluoride alongside a good dental regime would make such a difference in this battle against rotting teeth.

Josephine Adjetey, Clinical Lead, Community Dental Services, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals

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