

Children's Dentistry and the Tooth Fairy Centre at Core Dental Epping

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Description:

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Details:

With a specialist paediatric dentist on-site, Core Dental Epping's Tooth Fairy Centre provides expert children's dental care from first tooth to teenage years — right here in Melbourne's north.

Why Children's Dentistry Is Different

Children aren't just small adults. Their teeth, jaws, behaviour and emotional needs are fundamentally different from those of adult patients, and managing them effectively requires specialised training, experience and — perhaps most importantly — patience.

A child's first experiences with dentistry shape their attitude toward dental care for life. A positive, gentle introduction can establish a lifetime of healthy habits and stress-free dental visits. A negative experience can create dental anxiety that persists well into adulthood and leads to avoided appointments, delayed treatment and poorer oral health outcomes.

That's why Core Dental Epping has invested in something relatively uncommon for a suburban dental practice: a **specialist paediatric dentist on-site**.

Dr Aish Kesava — Specialist Paediatric Dentist

Dr Aish Kesava is a registered specialist in paediatric dentistry. This means Dr Kesava has completed a dental degree followed by an additional **three years of full-time specialist training** focused exclusively on the dental care of infants, children and adolescents.

Paediatric dental specialists are trained in:

- **Child behaviour management** — Techniques to help anxious, fearful or uncooperative children feel safe and comfortable during dental treatment
- **Growth and development** — Understanding how the teeth, jaws and face develop from infancy through adolescence, and identifying problems early
- **Paediatric dental disease** — Diagnosing and treating conditions specific to children's teeth, including early childhood caries, developmental defects and dental trauma
- **Sedation and general anaesthesia** — Managing children who require sedation or hospital-based treatment due to age, anxiety or complex dental needs
- **Special needs dentistry** — Providing dental care for children with physical, intellectual, medical or behavioural conditions that make standard dental treatment challenging
- **Dental trauma management** — Treating knocked-out, displaced, fractured or intruded teeth resulting from falls, sport and accidents

Having a paediatric specialist available at Core Dental Epping means your child has access to this level of expertise without needing a separate referral, a trip to a specialist clinic or a visit to a children's hospital — it's all available right here in Epping.

The Tooth Fairy Centre

The **Tooth Fairy Centre** at Core Dental Epping is designed to make dental visits a positive, even enjoyable experience for children. The environment, language and approach are all tailored to young patients:

- A welcoming, child-friendly atmosphere that puts kids at ease
- Age-appropriate explanations of treatments and procedures — "tell, show, do" techniques that help children understand what's happening without fear
- A focus on building trust and rapport before any treatment begins
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement throughout every visit

The Tooth Fairy Centre isn't just a name — it represents a philosophy of children's dental care that prioritises the child's emotional wellbeing alongside their clinical needs.

When Should My Child First Visit the Dentist?

The Australian Dental Association recommends that children have their **first dental visit by 12 months of age**, or within six months of the first tooth appearing — whichever comes first.

This might seem early, but the first visit isn't about drilling or filling. It's about:

- **Establishing a dental home** — A practice where your child's dental records, history and familiarity are built over time
- **Early assessment** — Checking that teeth are developing normally and that no problems are emerging
- **Parent education** — Guidance on infant oral hygiene, teething, diet, dummy use and bottle habits
- **Familiarisation** — Getting your child used to the dental environment in a non-threatening way, so that future visits feel normal and comfortable

A 12-month-old won't remember their first dental visit. But the habits and comfort established early make every subsequent visit easier.

Children's Dental Services

Preventive Care

Prevention is the cornerstone of children's dentistry at Core Dental Epping. The goal is to keep your child's teeth healthy and cavity-free through:

Regular check-ups — Monitoring tooth development, checking for decay, assessing bite and jaw growth, and screening for any abnormalities. Typically recommended every six months, though Dr Kesava may suggest a different schedule based on your child's individual risk factors.

Professional cleaning — Removing plaque and calculus, particularly from areas that young children often miss when brushing. Hygienist **Sina Hassani** provides gentle, thorough cleaning tailored to each child's needs.

Fluoride treatments — Professional-strength fluoride applied to the teeth to strengthen enamel and reduce decay risk. Particularly important for children at higher risk of cavities.

Fissure sealants — Thin, protective coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of newly erupted permanent back teeth (molars and premolars). The deep grooves (fissures) in these teeth are prime sites for decay — food and bacteria get trapped in the grooves, and a toothbrush can't always reach them effectively. Sealants fill these grooves, creating a smooth, easy-to-clean surface.

Fissure sealants are one of the most effective preventive treatments available for children. They're quick, painless and non-invasive — applied in minutes with no drilling or anaesthetic required.

Oral hygiene education — Teaching children (and parents) proper brushing and flossing technique in an age-appropriate, engaging way. Children generally need supervised brushing until at least age eight, as they lack the manual dexterity to clean effectively on their own.

****Dietary advice**** — Helping families understand which foods and drinks contribute to decay and how to make tooth-friendly choices. Common culprits include fruit juice, flavoured milk, sticky snacks and frequent snacking between meals.

Treatment of Dental Decay

Despite best preventive efforts, some children do develop cavities. When this happens, prompt treatment prevents the decay from spreading and causing pain, infection or damage to the developing permanent tooth underneath.

****Tooth-coloured fillings**** — Modern composite resin fillings that match the natural tooth colour. Used for small to medium cavities in both baby teeth and permanent teeth.

****Stainless steel crowns**** — Pre-formed metal crowns used to restore baby teeth with extensive decay. While not as aesthetically appealing as tooth-coloured restorations, stainless steel crowns are extremely durable and effective for back baby teeth that need to last several more years until they're naturally replaced.

****Pulp therapy (pulpotomy/pulpectomy)**** — When decay reaches the nerve of a baby tooth, pulp therapy removes the infected portion of the nerve while preserving the tooth. This is the baby tooth equivalent of a root canal, and it allows the tooth to remain in place until it's naturally ready to fall out — maintaining space for the permanent tooth.

****Extractions**** — When a baby tooth is too severely damaged or infected to be saved, extraction may be necessary. If the tooth is removed early (before the permanent tooth is ready to emerge), a space maintainer may be placed to keep the space open and prevent adjacent teeth from drifting.

Dental Trauma

Children are prone to dental injuries — falls in the playground, collisions during sport, accidents on bikes and scooters. Dental trauma requires prompt assessment and treatment, and Dr Kesava's specialist training ensures your child receives expert care.

****Common dental injuries in children include:****

- ****Knocked-out teeth**** — Baby teeth are generally not replanted, but permanent teeth should be replanted as quickly as possible (ideally within 30 minutes) - ****Displaced teeth**** — Teeth pushed out of position, intruded (pushed up into the gum) or extruded (partially pushed out of the socket) - ****Fractured teeth**** — Chipped, cracked or broken teeth, ranging from minor enamel chips to complex fractures involving the nerve - ****Soft tissue injuries**** — Cuts and tears to the lips, tongue, gums and cheeks

****If your child experiences dental trauma:****

1. Stay calm — your child will take cues from your reaction 2. If a permanent tooth has been knocked out, find it, handle it by the crown only, and keep it moist in milk 3. Call Core Dental Epping on ****(03) 9401 4622**** immediately 4. Get to the practice as quickly as possible

Habit Management

Certain childhood habits can affect dental development if they persist beyond the appropriate age:

****Thumb and finger sucking**** — Normal in infants and toddlers, but if it continues past age four or five, it can affect the alignment of the teeth and the development of the jaw. Dr Kesava can assess the impact and recommend gentle strategies for habit cessation.

****Dummy (pacifier) use**** — Similar to thumb sucking, prolonged dummy use beyond age two to three can affect dental development. Early weaning from the dummy is encouraged.

****Tongue thrusting**** — When the tongue pushes forward against the front teeth during swallowing, it can cause an open bite (front teeth that don't meet). This may require myofunctional therapy or orthodontic intervention.

****Mouth breathing**** — Chronic mouth breathing can affect jaw development, tooth position and facial growth. Dr Kesava can assess whether mouth breathing is affecting your child's dental development and recommend appropriate management.

Care for Children with Special Needs

Dr Aish Kesava has specialised training in providing dental care for children with:

- Autism spectrum disorder - Intellectual disabilities - Physical disabilities - Complex medical conditions (cardiac conditions, bleeding disorders, immunodeficiency) - Severe dental anxiety or phobia - Sensory processing difficulties

For these children, standard dental environments and approaches may not be appropriate. Dr Kesava adapts techniques, communication, timing and environment to meet each child's individual needs, and can arrange sedation or general anaesthesia when necessary.

Sedation Options for Children

Some children are unable to cooperate for dental treatment due to age, anxiety, behavioural factors or the nature of the treatment required. Core Dental Epping offers ****sleep dentistry**** options for children, which may include:

- ****Happy gas (nitrous oxide sedation)**** — A mild form of sedation delivered through a small nose piece. The child remains conscious and responsive but feels relaxed and less anxious. Wears off within minutes after the appointment. - ****Oral sedation**** — Medication given before the appointment to help the child relax. - ****General anaesthesia**** — For children requiring extensive treatment or those who cannot be managed with lighter sedation, treatment under general anaesthesia in a hospital setting may be arranged.

Dr Kesava will discuss the most appropriate option based on your child's age, medical history, temperament and treatment needs.

The Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)

The CDBS is an Australian Government program that provides eligible children aged ****2 to 17**** with up to ****\$1,026** in dental benefits** over a two-year period. This cap covers a range of basic dental services.

****Eligible services include:****

- Examinations and consultations - X-rays - Professional cleaning - Fluoride treatments - Fissure sealants - Fillings - Extractions - Root canal treatment on baby teeth

****Core Dental Epping bulk bills under the CDBS****, meaning there are no out-of-pocket costs for covered services for eligible children.

****Eligibility criteria:****

- The child must be aged 2 to 17 at some point during the calendar year - The child must be eligible for Medicare - The family must receive a relevant Australian Government payment (such as Family Tax Benefit Part A)

To check your child's eligibility, contact Medicare or ask the team at Core Dental Epping when you book.

Tips for Parents: Building Healthy Dental Habits

Start Early

- Begin cleaning your baby's gums with a soft, damp cloth after feeds, even before teeth appear - Once the first tooth appears, start brushing with a soft infant toothbrush and a smear (grain-of-rice size) of low-fluoride children's toothpaste - From age 18 months to 6 years, use a pea-sized amount of low-fluoride children's toothpaste - From age 6, switch to standard adult fluoride toothpaste

Supervise Brushing

Children need supervised brushing until at least ****age eight****. Before that age, they typically lack the fine motor skills to brush all surfaces effectively. Let them have a go first, then "finish up" for them to ensure all surfaces are cleaned.

Make It Fun

- Let your child choose their own toothbrush (favourite colour or character) - Use a two-minute timer or play a short song while brushing - Brush together — children learn by watching - Praise and positive reinforcement work better than nagging

Watch the Diet

- ****Water and plain milk**** are the best drinks for teeth - ****Limit juice, cordial, soft drinks and flavoured milk**** — these are high in sugar and/or acid - ****Avoid grazing**** — Frequent snacking means teeth are constantly under acid attack. Stick to regular meal and snack times - ****Cheese and crunchy vegetables**** are tooth-friendly snack options

Protect Teeth During Sport

Custom-fitted mouthguards provide the best protection for children's teeth during contact and collision sports. The team at Core Dental Epping can fabricate custom mouthguards in a range of colours and designs that kids actually want to wear.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are baby teeth really important? They're just going to fall out anyway.

Yes, baby teeth are very important. They allow your child to eat properly, speak clearly and smile confidently. They also hold space for the permanent teeth developing underneath. If baby teeth are lost too early (due to decay or infection), the permanent teeth may come through crooked because the space has closed.

My child is scared of the dentist. What can you do?

This is exactly what Dr Aish Kesava specialises in. Using behaviour management techniques, a child-friendly environment and, when necessary, sedation options, Dr Kesava helps anxious children receive the dental care they need in a way that builds positive associations rather than reinforcing fear.

How do I know if my child is eligible for the CDBS?

Contact Medicare on 132 011 or check via your MyGov account. Alternatively, the team at Core Dental Epping can help you check eligibility when you call to book.

What age should my child stop using a dummy?

Ideally by age two to three. Prolonged dummy use beyond this age can affect dental development, potentially causing an open bite or crossbite. If your child is having difficulty giving up the dummy, Dr Kesava can offer strategies and reassurance.

Does my child need X-rays?

X-rays are taken only when clinically necessary — for example, to check for decay between teeth that isn't visible to the eye, to assess developing teeth, or to evaluate after dental trauma. Digital X-rays at Core Dental Epping use very low radiation doses.

When should my child see an orthodontist?

The Australian Society of Orthodontists recommends an orthodontic assessment by age seven. Dr Kesava can identify early signs of orthodontic issues during regular check-ups and refer to an orthodontist when appropriate — including specialists at the Collins Street Specialist Centre.

Book Your Child's Appointment

Whether it's a first dental visit, a routine check-up, or urgent treatment for a dental injury, the Tooth Fairy Centre at Core Dental Epping is ready to welcome your child.

- **Phone:** (03) 9401 4622 - **National Booking Line:** 13 13 16 - **Email:**
epping@coredental.com.au - **Address:** Tenancy 3B/230 Cooper St, Epping VIC 3076 - **Hours:**
Monday to Friday 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM | Saturday 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Saturday morning appointments are available — perfect for school-age children who can't attend during the week. The practice is approximately a 10-minute walk from **Epping Station**, with bus connections on nearby High Street and convenient parking.

Core Dental Epping serves families from across Melbourne's northern suburbs, including Epping, South Morang, Mill Park, Lalor, Thomastown and Wollert.

Core Dental Epping is part of the Smile Solutions Group. For complex paediatric cases or specialist orthodontic referrals, access to the Collins Street Specialist Centre ensures your child receives the highest level of care.