

Children's Dentistry at Core Dental Southbank

Canonical: <https://directory.coredental.com.au/childrens-dentistry/children-s-dentistry-at-core-dental-southbank/>

Description:

Children's Dentistry at Core Dental Southbank **Category:** Children's Dentistry **Target Word Count:** 2,500 words --- ## Gentle, Thorough Dental Care for Children in Southbank Getting children...

Details:

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Gentle, Thorough Dental Care for Children in Southbank

Getting children started with dental care early is one of the most valuable things a parent can do. The habits, experiences and foundations laid in childhood shape a lifetime of oral health — and the difference between a child who sees the dentist as a normal, comfortable part of life and one who avoids dental care well into adulthood often comes down to those early visits.

At Core Dental Southbank, we welcome children from around age two. Our dentists are experienced with young patients and take the time to make dental visits positive, gentle and even enjoyable. We understand that a child's first dental experiences matter enormously, and we approach every young patient with patience and care.

For Southbank families living in the residential towers along City Road, Southbank Boulevard and beyond, having a family-friendly dental practice within walking distance is a genuine convenience — especially when juggling the schedules of working parents and school-age children.

When Should My Child First Visit the Dentist?

The Australian Dental Association recommends that children have their first dental visit by the time their first tooth appears, or by their first birthday. In practice, we find that around **age two** is when most children are ready for a meaningful first examination — old enough to sit in the chair (often on a parent's lap), and young enough to start building positive associations with dental visits.

What Happens at a Child's First Visit?

The first visit is primarily about:

- **Familiarisation** — Getting your child comfortable with the dental environment: the chair, the light, the sounds, the team. We go at your child's pace.
- **Gentle examination** — Your dentist will look at your child's teeth, gums and developing jaw. This is usually done with a mirror and a light — no drills, no scary instruments.
- **Counting teeth** — Young children often enjoy this part. It makes the visit feel interactive and fun rather than clinical.
- **Parent guidance** — Your dentist will talk to you about caring for your child's teeth at home: brushing technique, toothpaste, diet, thumb-sucking, dummy use, and what to watch for as more teeth come through.
- **Building rapport** — The most important outcome of the first visit is a child who leaves feeling positive about the experience and is willing to come back.

There's no pressure and no judgement. If your child isn't ready for an examination, that's fine. Even a visit where they just sit in the chair, meet the team, and go home with a sticker is a success.

Regular Dental Check-ups for Children

After the first visit, we recommend **six-monthly check-ups** for most children. Regular visits allow us to:

- **Monitor tooth development** — Track the eruption of baby teeth and later permanent teeth, identifying any delays, missing teeth, or unusual patterns early
- **Detect decay early** — Children's teeth are particularly susceptible to decay. Catching it early means smaller, simpler treatment
- **Assess jaw growth and alignment** — Early identification of bite problems, crowding, or jaw discrepancies allows for timely intervention or referral
- **Reinforce good habits** — Each visit is an opportunity to encourage and reinforce good oral hygiene habits
- **Build a dental history** — A complete record of your child's dental development from early childhood is valuable for planning future treatment if needed

What a Children's Check-up Includes

- **Visual examination** of all teeth and gum tissue
- **Age-appropriate X-rays** when clinically indicated — typically from around age four or five, depending on the child's ability to cooperate and the clinical need. We use digital X-rays, which have significantly lower radiation than traditional film
- **Assessment of bite and jaw development**
- **Professional cleaning** when appropriate
- **Oral hygiene instruction** tailored to the child's age and development
- **Dietary advice** for parents — particularly around snacking frequency and sugary drinks
- **Fluoride treatments** where recommended

Preventive Treatments for Children

Prevention is always better than treatment, especially for children. Core Dental Southbank offers several preventive treatments designed to protect developing teeth:

Fissure Sealants

Fissure sealants are one of the most effective preventive treatments available for children's teeth. They involve applying a thin, protective coating to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (molars and premolars), where most childhood decay occurs.

Why the back teeth? The chewing surfaces of molars have deep grooves and pits (fissures) that trap food and bacteria. These fissures are often too narrow for toothbrush bristles to clean effectively, making them prime sites for decay to start.

How sealants work: The sealant material flows into the fissures and sets to form a smooth, protective barrier. Bacteria and food can no longer get trapped in the grooves, dramatically reducing the risk of decay on those surfaces.

When are sealants applied? Sealants are typically applied:

- When the first permanent molars come through (around age six)
- When the second permanent molars come through (around age twelve)
- On premolars if the grooves are deep and decay-prone

The procedure is:

- Completely painless — no drilling, no anaesthetic
- Quick — takes just a few minutes per tooth
- Non-invasive — no tooth structure is removed
- Effective — sealants can reduce the risk of molar

decay by up to 80% in the first two years

Sealants can last several years with normal wear, and they're checked at each regular visit and reapplied if needed.

Fluoride Treatments

Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel and makes teeth more resistant to acid attacks from plaque bacteria and sugars. While fluoride is present in Australian tap water and most toothpastes, some children benefit from additional professional fluoride application:

- Children at higher risk of decay - Children with deep grooves that haven't been sealed - Children with orthodontic appliances - Children who snack frequently or consume sugary drinks

Professional fluoride treatment is quick, painless, and applied as a varnish painted onto the teeth.

Dietary Advice

Diet plays a crucial role in children's dental health. The frequency of sugar exposure matters more than the total amount — frequent snacking on sugary or starchy foods creates repeated acid attacks on tooth enamel.

Your dentist at Core Dental Southbank will provide practical, realistic dietary advice, including:

- Limiting sugary drinks (including juice) and encouraging water - Reducing snacking frequency between meals - Choosing tooth-friendly snacks (cheese, vegetables, plain yoghurt, nuts) - Understanding hidden sugars in processed foods - The importance of not putting children to bed with a bottle of milk or juice

Common Children's Dental Treatments

Fillings

If your child develops a cavity, your dentist will recommend a filling. Children's fillings are typically placed using tooth-coloured composite resin, which provides a natural appearance and bonds directly to the tooth structure.

- **Baby teeth matter** — Even though baby teeth will eventually fall out, untreated decay can cause pain, infection, and damage to the developing permanent teeth underneath. Baby teeth also maintain space for the permanent teeth; losing one prematurely can cause spacing and alignment problems. - **Gentle approach** — Our dentists take extra time and care with children to ensure the experience is as comfortable as possible. Local anaesthetic is used when needed, applied gently with techniques designed to minimise discomfort.

Extractions

Sometimes a baby tooth needs to be removed — due to extensive decay, infection, or to assist the eruption of a permanent tooth that's being blocked. Baby tooth extractions are generally straightforward procedures.

- **Managing anxiety** — We explain the process in age-appropriate language and ensure your child feels safe and supported throughout - **Space maintainers** — If a baby tooth is lost prematurely, your dentist may recommend a space maintainer to hold the space open for the permanent tooth that will eventually erupt in that position

Mouthguards

If your child plays contact sports or activities with a risk of dental injury, a **custom-fitted mouthguard** is essential. Custom mouthguards from your dentist provide far superior protection, fit and comfort compared to boil-and-bite varieties from the chemist.

We can make custom mouthguards for children and teenagers in a range of colours and designs.

Managing Dental Anxiety in Children

Some children are naturally anxious about dental visits, and that's completely normal. Our team at Core Dental Southbank uses several strategies to help anxious children feel safe:

- **Tell-show-do** — We explain what's going to happen in simple terms, show the child the instruments (letting them touch and hear the tools), then proceed with the treatment. No surprises.
- **Positive reinforcement** — Praise, encouragement and small rewards (stickers, for example) reinforce positive behaviour and create good associations with dental visits.
- **Distraction** — Talking to the child, counting, and engaging their attention during procedures.
- **Parent presence** — Parents are welcome to stay with their child during the appointment. For younger children, sitting on a parent's lap during the examination is often the most comfortable arrangement.
- **Gradual exposure** — For very anxious children, we may recommend a series of short, non-treatment visits to build familiarity and trust before any clinical work is attempted.
- **Calm, unhurried pace** — We never rush a child through treatment. If they need a break, they get a break.

When Specialist Paediatric Dental Care May Be Needed

Most children do wonderfully with the gentle, patient approach of our general dentists. However, some children may benefit from referral to a **specialist paediatric dentist** at the Collins Street Specialist Centre:

- Children with **severe dental anxiety** that prevents treatment in a general dental setting
- Children with **complex dental needs** (multiple teeth requiring treatment, or treatment under general anaesthesia)
- Children with **medical conditions** that affect dental management (such as bleeding disorders, heart conditions, or immune conditions)
- Children with **special needs** that require adapted clinical approaches
- Very young children (under three) with extensive decay (**early childhood caries**)
- Cases involving **dental trauma** to developing permanent teeth where specialist assessment is warranted

The referral pathway is direct. Your child's records, X-rays and treatment history are shared with the specialist, ensuring continuity of care.

School-Age Dental Care

As children grow, their dental needs evolve. Here's what to focus on at each stage:

Ages 2–5 (Preschool)

- First dental visits and building comfort
- Parent-assisted brushing (children under six lack the coordination to brush effectively on their own)
- Low-fluoride toothpaste (children's formulation) until age six
- Monitoring baby tooth development
- Dietary habits — establishing good patterns early

Ages 6–12 (Primary School)

- **First permanent molars** erupt around age six — these teeth need to last a lifetime and are prime candidates for fissure sealants
- **Mixed dentition** — A mix of baby teeth and permanent teeth creates challenges for cleaning. Extra attention to oral hygiene is important during this phase
- **Sports mouthguards** — As children become involved in organised sports
- Transition to adult-strength

fluoride toothpaste (from around age six, or as advised by your dentist) - Children can begin brushing independently but should be supervised until around age eight to ensure effectiveness - **Orthodontic assessment** — Your dentist will monitor alignment and bite development and discuss whether orthodontic treatment may be needed

Ages 12–17 (Secondary School)

- **Second permanent molars** erupt around age twelve — another opportunity for fissure sealants - **Wisdom teeth** may begin developing and can be monitored via X-rays - **Orthodontic treatment** — Many teenagers begin Invisalign or other orthodontic treatment during this period - Increased independence in oral hygiene — and sometimes decreased motivation. Regular check-ups help keep teenagers on track - Dietary challenges — energy drinks, sports drinks and snacking patterns common among teenagers can increase decay risk

Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) — Bulk Billed

The **Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)** is a Medicare program that provides eligible children aged **2 to 17** with up to **\$1,026** in dental benefits over a two-year period.

Core Dental Southbank **bulk bills** CDBS-eligible patients, meaning there is **no out-of-pocket cost** for covered services.

What's Covered Under CDBS?

- Examinations - X-rays - Cleaning (scale and clean) - Fluoride treatment - Fissure sealants - Fillings - Root canal treatment - Extractions

What's Not Covered?

- Orthodontic treatment (braces, Invisalign) - Cosmetic procedures - Hospital or general anaesthesia fees

How to Check Eligibility

Eligibility is determined by Medicare based on family income thresholds and receipt of certain government payments (such as Family Tax Benefit Part A). You can check your child's eligibility by:

- Logging into your **Medicare online account** through myGov - Calling **Medicare on 132 011** - Asking our reception team at Core Dental Southbank — we can help you check

If your child is eligible, simply bring your **Medicare card** to the appointment. We'll process the bulk billing directly — no upfront payment and no claim forms for covered services.

Tips for Parents

Making Dental Visits Positive

- **Start early** — The earlier children start visiting the dentist, the more normal it becomes - **Keep it positive** — Avoid using words like "hurt," "pain," "needle" or "drill" when talking about dental visits. Let the dental team introduce concepts in age-appropriate language - **Don't transfer your own anxiety** — If you're nervous about the dentist, try not to let your child pick up on it. Children are perceptive - **Read books or watch videos** about going to the dentist — several children's books and shows normalise the experience - **Avoid using dental visits as threats** — "If you don't brush, the dentist will pull your teeth out" creates fear and avoidance

Home Care Basics

- **Brush twice daily** — Morning and night, using an age-appropriate toothbrush and toothpaste - **Supervise brushing** until around age eight — let your child brush first, then "check" by brushing again yourself - **Pea-sized amount of toothpaste** from age six; smear (rice-grain size) for younger children - **Introduce flossing** when teeth start touching — your dentist can show you and your child the best technique - **Limit juice and sugary drinks** — water and milk are the best choices for teeth - **Avoid grazing** — Frequent snacking exposes teeth to repeated acid attacks

Book Your Child's Appointment

Whether it's a first visit for your toddler, a routine check-up for your primary schooler, or an Invisalign consultation for your teenager, Core Dental Southbank is here for your family.

Core Dental Southbank 55 City Road, Southbank VIC 3006

Phone: (03) 8547 0780 **National Bookings:** 13 13 16 **Email:** southbank@coredental.com.au

Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Saturday: 8:00 am – 1:30 pm Sunday: Closed

Our Saturday appointments and early-morning weekday times are particularly popular with families. Call Shontelle and the team to find a time that works for your family, and let us know if your child is eligible for the CDBS so we can arrange bulk billing.