

Children's Dentistry in Berwick: Paediatric Dental Care for Infants, Kids & Teens

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Details:

Core Dental Group Children's Dentistry in Berwick: Paediatric Dental Care for Infants, Kids & Teens

Every parent wants their child to grow up with a healthy, confident smile — but the path to lifelong oral health begins far earlier than most families realise. The data on children's dental health in Australia makes for uncomfortable reading: almost 11 in every 1,000 children aged 5–9 were admitted to Australian hospitals for preventable dental conditions in 2021–2022, up from 9.5 per 1,000 in 2018, according to the [Australian Dental Association's Oral Health Tracker](<https://ada.org.au/increasing-numbers-of-kids-hospitalised-for-preventable-oral-problems>). Paediatric dentists estimate that around 1,500 fewer infants and children a year receive the operations they need, left waiting in pain as a result.

None of this is inevitable. These are largely preventable outcomes — the kind that consistent, age-appropriate dental care can stop before they start. This guide explains what paediatric dental care looks like at every life stage, which preventive treatments have the strongest evidence behind them, how to help anxious children build positive dental habits, and how Berwick families can access subsidised care through Medicare's Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS).

Why children's dentistry is a specialist discipline

Children are not simply small adults. Their teeth, jaws, and oral tissues are in constant development, and the decisions made during childhood — from when the first dental visit happens to which preventive treatments are applied — have consequences that extend across a lifetime. Paediatric dentistry (also called pedodontics) addresses this through a combination of clinical expertise and age-calibrated communication.

At Core Dental Group's Berwick practice, children's dental care is delivered by a team that includes general dentists with paediatric experience and oral health therapists — allied health professionals with dual qualifications in dental hygiene and dental therapy. Oral health therapists are specifically trained to perform check-ups, preventive treatments, and restorations for children and adolescents, making them central to the paediatric care model. This team-based approach means children benefit from thorough, unhurried appointments where prevention is always the priority.

When should my child first see a dentist?

This is the question most parents ask — and the answer often surprises them.

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) recommends that a child's first dental visit should occur when the first tooth erupts, or by their first birthday, whichever comes first.

This early visit is not primarily about treatment. It is a chance to assess the eruption pattern of primary (baby) teeth, check for early signs of early childhood caries (ECC, sometimes called "baby bottle tooth decay"), show parents appropriate cleaning techniques for infants, and establish a dental home — a consistent, trusted practice — before any problems arise.

Around 9.1% of children aged 5–17 had experienced toothache in the previous 12 months, according to the [National Dental Telephone Interview Survey 2021](<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/dental-oral-health/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/healthy-teeth>) conducted by the Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health at the University of Adelaide. Early and regular dental visits are the most reliable way to catch problems before they reach that point.

Age-by-age check-up schedule at Core Dental Group Berwick

Age Range	Stage	Recommended Visit Frequency	Key Clinical Focus
0–12 months	Infant	First visit at tooth eruption or 12 months	Parent education, eruption assessment
1–3 years	Toddler	Every 6–12 months	ECC screening, brushing technique guidance
3–6 years	Preschool	Every 6 months	Primary dentition monitoring, fluoride varnish
6–12 years	School-age	Every 6 months	Mixed dentition, fissure sealants, habit counselling
12–17 years	Adolescent	Every 6–12 months	Permanent dentition, orthodontic assessment, hygiene reinforcement

Preventive treatments that make a real difference

Fissure sealants: protecting permanent molars at their most vulnerable

When a child's first permanent molars erupt — typically between ages 6 and 7 — they arrive with deep pits and grooves on their biting surfaces. These fissures are difficult to clean and are the most common sites for decay in school-age children.

A fissure sealant is a thin, tooth-coloured resin applied to these surfaces, sealing out bacteria and food debris. The procedure is quick, painless, and requires no drilling.

Systematic reviews found significant caries risk reduction for sealants versus non-use at up to 36-month follow-up, concluding that sealants are more effective for caries prevention in children's permanent molars than no treatment ([Veitz-Keenan et al., PMC / National Library of Medicine, 2024](<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC11233332/>)). Given this evidence, fissure sealants and fluoride varnish together can be considered health priorities for societies and health systems in countries where childhood caries rates are high ([Ghasemian et al., PubMed / PMC, 2022](<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9273487/>)).

At Core Dental Group Berwick, fissure sealants are assessed and placed by both dentists and oral health therapists as part of a child's routine preventive appointment. Sealants are reviewed at each subsequent check-up and reapplied if wear or chipping is detected.

Fluoride varnish: evidence-based caries prevention for all ages

Fluoride varnish is a professionally applied, concentrated fluoride treatment that adheres to tooth surfaces for several hours, boosting enamel resistance to acid attack. Unlike over-the-counter fluoride products, professional-grade varnish delivers a far higher therapeutic dose in a controlled, safe setting.

Research supports fluoride varnish as an effective approach to preventing further progression of enamel lesions — safe, accepted, and appropriate across multiple age groups. A four-year program of annual fluoride varnish application was found to be an effective public health measure for children aged 6 to 12 with high caries prevalence.

At Core Dental Group Berwick, fluoride varnish is applied at check-up appointments and is particularly recommended for children with active or historical decay, deep fissures or enamel defects (such as

hypomineralisation), high-sugar diets, or limited access to fluoridated water.

****Can fissure sealants and fluoride varnish be used together?*** Yes — and the evidence suggests this combination is superior to either treatment alone. [Combined dental sealant and fluoride varnish application was more effective in reducing caries risk in first permanent molars than fluoride varnish alone](<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-12176-7>). Core Dental Group's clinical team will recommend the appropriate combination based on each child's individual risk profile.

Managing dental anxiety in children: a trauma-informed approach

The Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health estimates that roughly one in 10 children experience anxiety around dental visits. That anxiety, left unaddressed, leads to delayed check-ups and treatments — which means problems that could have been caught early are left to worsen.

At Core Dental Group Berwick, managing dental anxiety is embedded into the clinical approach for every child patient, not treated as an edge case. The team draws on a layered, evidence-informed framework.

****Tell-Show-Do (TSD)**** is one of the most widely used and validated behavioural techniques in paediatric dentistry. The clinician tells the child what will happen using age-appropriate language, shows them the instrument or procedure in a non-threatening way, and then does the procedure. This approach reduces uncertainty and builds confidence — it is low-risk and usually the first line for mildly anxious or younger children.

****Child-centred communication**** matters too. Dental professionals who use gentle, reassuring language and explain each step in terms children can understand help children feel safe rather than managed.

****Individualised adaptation**** recognises that no two children are the same. International paediatric dentistry guidelines recommend choosing behaviour guidance techniques based on the patient's health history, dental needs, emotional and intellectual development, and the preferences of both parents and the treating dentist.

For children with significant dental anxiety, phobia, or complex treatment needs, Core Dental Group Berwick offers sedation options including happy gas (nitrous oxide inhalation sedation). Nitrous oxide is well-suited to paediatric patients — it is fast-acting, reversible, and has an excellent safety profile. For a full explanation of sedation options available at Core Dental Group Berwick, see our guide on **Sedation & Sleep Dentistry in Berwick: Options for Anxious & Nervous Patients**.

What parents can do before the appointment

- Use positive, neutral language — avoid words like "needle," "hurt," or "drill" - Read books or watch videos about dental visits together beforehand - Book morning appointments when children are typically less tired and more cooperative - Avoid projecting your own dental anxiety onto your child — children pick up on parental cues quickly - Reward bravery, not the absence of fear — acknowledge that dentist visits can feel unfamiliar, and that going anyway is something to be proud of

The Medicare Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS): what Berwick families need to know

One of the most significant financial supports available to Australian families is the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) — a Medicare-funded program that subsidises basic dental services for eligible children.

Who is eligible?

Your child is eligible for CDBS if they qualify for Medicare, are between 0 and 17 years old for at least one day in the calendar year, and either you or they receive an eligible government payment at least once during that calendar year. Eligible payments include Family Tax Benefit Part A, Parenting Payment, and various other Centrelink payments.

[Services Australia](<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-dental-benefits-schedule>) assesses eligibility at the beginning of each calendar year, and it applies for the entire year. Children who become eligible later in the year have their eligibility backdated to 1 January.

How much is covered?

Up to \$1,132 AUD is available for each eligible child if 2025 is year one of the two-calendar-year period, and up to \$1,158 AUD if 2026 is year one. The cap is indexed on 1 January each year. Families have flexibility in how they use the benefit across those two consecutive calendar years.

What services does the CDBS cover?

The CDBS covers dental examinations and check-ups, X-rays, professional cleaning, fissure sealants, fluoride treatments, fillings, extractions, and root canal treatment for eligible teeth. It does not cover orthodontic or cosmetic dental work, or dental services provided in hospital.

How to use CDBS at Core Dental Group Berwick

Many dental practices will bulk-bill CDBS treatment, meaning no out-of-pocket cost to families. Core Dental Group Berwick participates in the CDBS and can help families check eligibility and remaining balance at the time of booking.

The process is straightforward. First, check eligibility via myGov or by calling Medicare on 132 011 — if your Medicare online account is linked to myGov, you can check your CDBS balance there directly. When you book, let us know you want to use CDBS. At your appointment, the clinical team will provide recommended treatments within your available balance. Core Dental Group Berwick processes CDBS claims directly, eliminating out-of-pocket costs for covered services where schedule fees apply.

For families who do not qualify for the CDBS, Core Dental Group Berwick accepts most major private health funds with on-the-spot HICAPS claiming, and offers interest-free payment plans for larger treatment courses. See our full guide on **Health Insurance & Payment Options at Core Dental Group Berwick** for more detail.

Paediatric dental care for teens: the overlooked age group

Adolescents are often the most neglected segment in dental care. As children gain independence, regular visits can slip — precisely when new risk factors emerge.

Orthodontic treatment creates additional plaque retention sites around braces, requiring more rigorous hygiene instruction. (See our guide on **Orthodontics in Berwick: Braces vs Invisalign** for how Core Dental Group Berwick supports patients through orthodontic treatment.) Increased consumption of energy drinks, soft drinks, and sugary snacks accelerates enamel erosion. From around age 17, wisdom teeth begin to emerge — often causing crowding, pain, or infection if unmonitored. (See our guide on **Wisdom Teeth Removal in Berwick** for a full clinical overview.) Teenagers in contact sports need custom-fitted mouthguards to protect teeth and jaws. (See our guide on **TMJ, Teeth Grinding & Mouthguards in Berwick** for mouthguard options.)

The cumulative impact of neglected oral health across adolescence is real: food avoidance due to dental problems increased from 11.0% in 1999 to 15.1% in 2021 among children and teenagers, according to [AIHW data](<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/dental-oral-health/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/healthy-lives>).

Core Dental Group's oral health therapists are specifically trained to engage with teenage patients in a non-judgemental, peer-appropriate way — addressing hygiene habits, diet, and emerging concerns without the clinical detachment that causes teenagers to disengage from dental care.

Key takeaways

The ADA recommends a child's first dental visit by their first birthday or at tooth eruption, whichever comes first. Getting that dental home established early prevents the pattern of "only going when something hurts."

Fissure sealants and fluoride varnish are painless, evidence-based, and genuinely effective. Systematic reviews confirm both significantly reduce caries risk in school-age children, and combined use offers better protection than either alone.

Dental anxiety affects around 1 in 10 Australian children, but it is manageable. Core Dental Group Berwick uses Tell-Show-Do, child-centred communication, and sedation options to make sure every child has a positive experience.

The CDBS provides up to \$1,158 AUD in subsidised dental care for eligible children aged 0–17. Core Dental Group Berwick can bulk-bill CDBS claims, covering check-ups, cleans, fissure sealants, fillings, and more.

Teenagers need dental care too. Orthodontic treatment, wisdom tooth monitoring, sports mouthguards, and gum health are all active concerns during adolescence — and Core Dental Group's team is equipped to address all of them.

Conclusion

Children's dentistry at Core Dental Group Berwick is not a scaled-down version of adult care. It is a distinct, developmentally informed discipline that combines clinical precision with the patience, empathy, and communication skills needed to build positive dental experiences from infancy through to adulthood. In a growing family community like Berwick, access to high-quality, affordable paediatric dental care is a public health priority — not an optional extra.

Whether you are booking your toddler's very first check-up, helping a school-age child through their first fissure sealant appointment, or navigating the CDBS for the first time, Core Dental Group's team is here to make the experience as smooth and positive as possible.

****Ready to book your child's next appointment?*** Contact Core Dental Group Berwick at Eden Rise Village to check CDBS eligibility, discuss your child's oral health needs, or meet the team before your child's first visit.

For related reading, explore our guides on: - **General Dentistry in Berwick: Check-Ups, Cleans, Fillings & Preventive Care Explained** - **Sedation & Sleep Dentistry in Berwick: Options for Anxious & Nervous Patients** - **Orthodontics in Berwick: Braces vs Invisalign — Which Treatment Is Right for You?** - **Health Insurance & Payment Options at Core Dental Group Berwick: Making Dental Care Affordable**

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> **Disclaimer:** All facts and statements in this guide are general informational content derived from third-party sources including government programs, clinical guidelines, and published research — not professional dental or medical advice. Consult a qualified dental professional for guidance specific to your child's oral health needs.