

Focus on

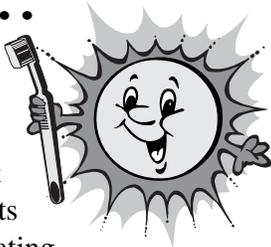
Fluoride

This newsletter is designed to share information on school fluoride programs with administrators, principals, and teachers. PLEASE ROUTE THIS newsletter to staff working with the school fluoride program.

Vol. 7, No. 1 February 2002

Bright Smiles, Bright Futures . . .

The Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures Oral Health Kit for 2002 is on its way to participating schools. Each kit contains take-home materials for 30 children and everything you need to make oral health education an easy part of your existing curriculum. New for 2002 is a kit for Kindergarten.



Dental Health Education Sessions Available

Oral health presentations for children in preschool through grade six are now available. Designed by staff of the Oral Health Program, these presentations are age appropriate and sequential, and include follow-up activities to promote the development of healthy habits. If you are interested, call your regional consultant to schedule a presentation.

Annual Report Time . .

The annual report of program participation was sent to your school in January. Please be sure to fill it out and return it by Feb. 15, 2002. Since we are a federally funded program, we must report this data for continued funding.

February Is National Children's Dental Health Month

"DON'T LET YOUR SMILE BECOME EXTINCT" is the theme for National Children's Dental Health Month. This year's campaign features Dudley the Dinosaur and his pals on an archeological dig.

To keep your smile from becoming extinct be sure to:

1. Brush and floss each day.
2. Eat nutritious foods.
3. Visit your dentist regularly.

Activities that can be incorporated into your lesson plans include:

- ✓ Hold a dental health coloring or art contest; use the theme "Don't Let Your Smile Become Extinct!" and ask children to draw a picture of themselves with a big smile. You also may use one of the coloring sheets enclosed with this newsletter.
- ✓ Show a dental health video for children.
- ✓ Create a "Healthy Smiles" oral health bulletin board with smile photos that students clip from magazines. Add oral health tips: brush and floss each day, eat nutritious foods, visit your dentist regularly, etc.
- ✓ Hold a dental health essay or limerick contest. Children could complete a sentence such as "My smile is important because . . ." or "The best thing about a person's smile is . . ."
- ✓ Invite a dental professional to your classroom to inform children about proper oral health habits.
- ✓ Hold a "sugarfast" day at your school. Encourage children not to eat any foods with added sugar that day.
- ✓ Place an article about oral health in your school newsletter. Feel free to use any information found in this Focus on Fluoride newsletter
- ✓ Take a field trip to a local dental office and write a report about the visit.
- ✓ Hold a dental health fair.
- ✓ Spell dental terms.
- ✓ Have your class check out these dental websites for kids: www.oralbkids.com; www.floss.com; www.mrreach.com.



Smoking and TEENS

Although tobacco use has long been the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., most young people start this daily habit not fully understanding how addictive tobacco is or how serious the health consequences of smoking. Within only days, teens can find themselves hooked on smoking.

For young people, the short-term health consequences of smoking include:

- A lower level of lung function.
- Shortness of breath.
- An increase in the resting heart rate.
- Slower lung growth.
- Increased amounts of phlegm.

As a result of the effects of smoking on the body, young people who smoke are not as physically fit – in terms of both performance and endurance – as they would be if they did not smoke.

Use of tobacco also affects the oral health of young people; the consequences include:

- Staining of teeth.
- Bad breath.
- Future periodontal disease and tooth loss.
- Increased plaque and calculus buildup.
- Diminished taste and smell.

Because sports are so popular in America, they are an ideal way to reach youth with information about tobacco use and addictions. Athletes and coaches can be strong role models for kids. Other ideas would be to prohibit tobacco use at sporting events and to educate kids at special events such as sports clinics.

Another excellent opportunity to reach young people with important health messages is through school tobacco prevention programs. These school programs provide education during the years when the risk of becoming addicted to tobacco is greatest.

And lastly, recent research has documented that a strong sense of belonging to a family and being connected to parents greatly increases the likelihood that a teenager will avoid risk behaviors such as tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse.

Parents, coaches, athletes, teachers and anyone who cares about kids have a strong influence over youth and can help spare them the pain of a life cut short by tobacco.



SOFT DRINKS – Hard on Teeth . . .

What was once an occasional treat has now become a daily habit for a number of people, especially kids, teens and young adults. Cool and bubbly, soft drinks have become the second most popular beverage consumed in America. Unfortunately, these beverages are causing significant harm to the young people who consume them.

A steady diet of soft drinks is a leading cause of tooth decay. The ingredients in sodas contribute to cavities and promote the destruction of tooth structure. Pop is basically sugar water. There are about 10 teaspoons of sugar in a 12-ounce can. Sugar in pop combines with bacteria in your mouth to form an acid that attacks the teeth for about 20 minutes, and stops. The 20-minute attack starts

with the first exposure to sugar and lasts until 20 minutes after the last exposure to sugar, so if you sip all day, your mouth is constantly under acid attack. Diet or "sugar-free" pop contains its own acid that attacks teeth.

To protect teeth from soda pop and reduce tooth decay:

- Drink soft drinks in moderation.
- Don't sip for extended periods of time. Ongoing sipping prolongs sugar and acid attacks on your teeth.
- Use a straw to keep the sugar away from your teeth.
- Drink water instead of pop. It has no sugar, no acid and no calories.
- Brush twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste and floss, too.

Supplies...

For fluoride program supplies, call Oral Health Program: 701.328.4930 • 1.800.472.2286 • Fax: 701.328.1412

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