

Healthy
Under 5s

Dental Health E-presentation

www.healthycornwall.org.uk



Learning Outcomes

This short E-presentation has been developed to give you a basic understanding of the importance of good dental health and dental health promotion.

In this presentation you will cover the following topics:

- ✓ Why we should be concerned about poor dental health
- ✓ The types and causes of dental disease
- ✓ Signs of dental disease in children
- ✓ Dental neglect
- ✓ How to prevent dental decay
- ✓ The role of early years settings in dental health promotion



Tooth decay is the most common oral disease affecting children and young people in England, yet it is largely preventable.



The Scale of the Problem

- ✓ **12%** of 3-year-old children have tooth decay
- ✓ **25%** of 5-year-old children have tooth decay
- ✓ Each child with tooth decay will have on average **3 to 4 teeth** affected
- ✓ Over **63,000** children aged 0 to 19 years were admitted to hospital for tooth extractions in 2014 to 2015
- ✓ The majority of tooth decay in children under 6 is **untreated**



Dental decay has a significant impact on a child's health and wellbeing

Children can be affected by:

- ✓ **Difficulty chewing** - severe oral disease lead to difficulty chewing, affecting growth and development.
- ✓ **Low self-esteem and social isolation** - children may be reluctant to smile due to embarrassment about the appearance of their teeth.
- ✓ **Difficulty sleeping** – 38% of children had sleepless nights due to pain associated with poor oral health
- ✓ **Impaired speech development**
- ✓ **Missed opportunities for learning** - children with severe oral disease may have frequent absences from school

Health and Social Care Issues

Poor oral health is often associated with wider health and social care issues. These include:

- ✓ Poor nutrition
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ The need for parenting support
- ✓ In some cases safeguarding issues and neglect

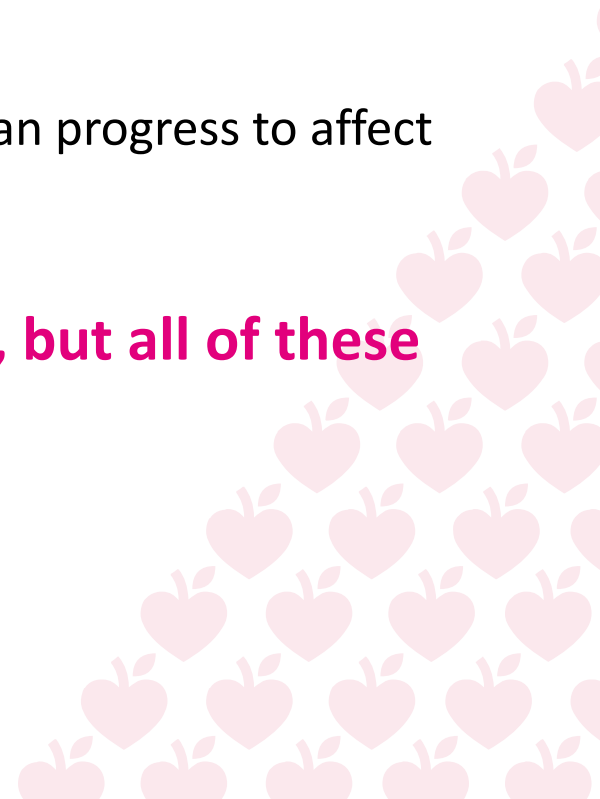


Dental decay is **associated with deprivation**, with some of the most vulnerable children facing very poor oral health.

Problems Teeth Get

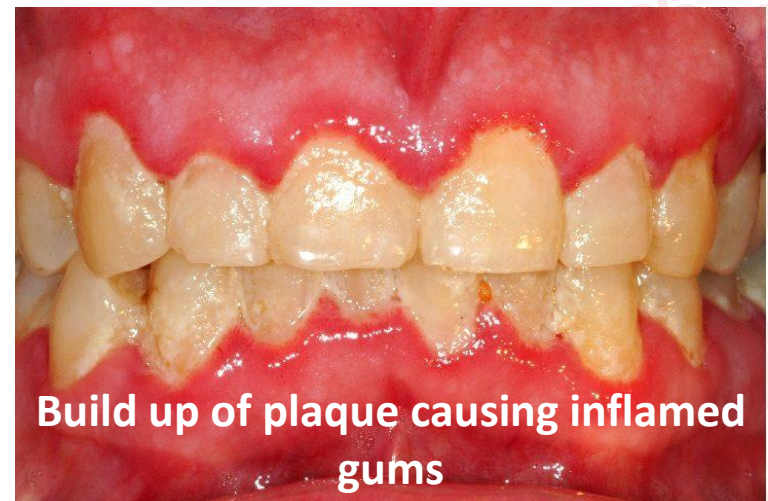
- ✓ **Dental caries** – also known as tooth decay or cavities. Caused by damage to the tooth's enamel and its underlying layer.
- ✓ **Dental trauma** – trauma to the mouth that dislodges or fractures teeth. This includes non-accidental injury.
- ✓ **Gum disease** - inflammation of the gum line that can progress to affect the bone that surrounds and supports your teeth

All of these problems can lead to tooth loss, but all of these problems are preventable



Cause of Dental Disease

- ✓ Many different types of **bacteria** live in our mouths
- ✓ These bacteria build up on our teeth and along the gum line, forming a sticky colourless film called **plaque**.
- ✓ The plaque bacteria can infect your gums causing **gum disease**
- ✓ These bacteria also turn sugar in the foods we eat into acids.
- ✓ The acids dissolve minerals in the hard enamel of the tooth leading to **cavities** and tooth decay
- ✓ If plaque is not removed it can harden and turn into tartar. More plaque then forms on top of this **tartar**.
- ✓ Tartar can not be removed by normal brushing and must be removed by a dentist.



Signs of Dental Disease

Children with tooth decay may have the some of the following symptoms:

- ✓ Change in eating and/or drinking habits
- ✓ Increase in saliva and/or drooling more
- ✓ Bad breath
- ✓ Face holding or slapping
- ✓ Chewing on fingers or other items
- ✓ Behavioural changes
- ✓ Increase in night waking
- ✓ Fever, swelling or irritability, which could indicate infection



Dental Neglect & Non-Accidental Injury



Dental Neglect

- ✓ Dental neglect occurs when a parent or guardian fails to seek and follow through with treatment necessary to ensure good dental health for the child.
- ✓ Dental neglect may occur because of a parent's lack of understanding of dental disease.
- ✓ However, in some cases, dental neglect may indicate willful neglect and serious safeguarding concerns

Dental Trauma

- ✓ Dental trauma (e.g. tooth fractures) in children may be a sign of non-accidental injury.
- ✓ It is important to consider the following points:
 - Does the injury match the history given?
 - Does the history given by the parents/carers match the child's account?
 - Does the history change over time?
 - Does the child's behaviour seem appropriate to the injury?
 - How is the child interacting with the parent and with the professionals?

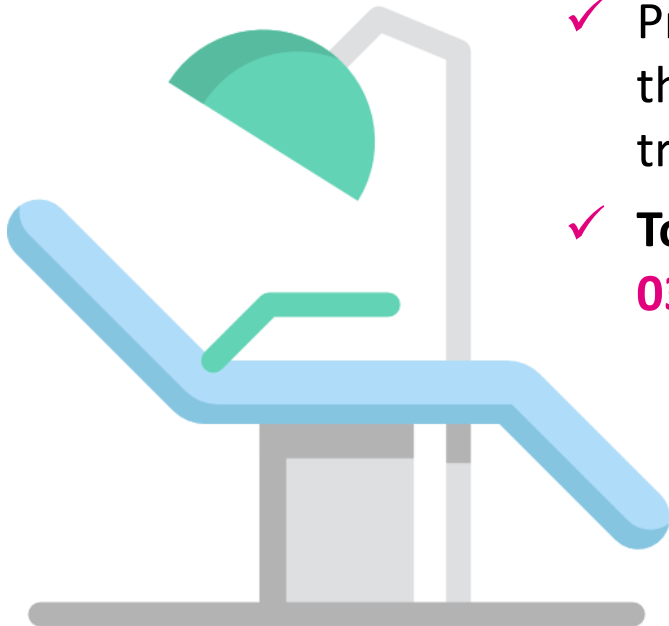
Dental disease should never be interpreted in isolation, but always assessed in the context of the child's medical and social history

How to Prevent Tooth Decay



Visiting the Dentist

- ✓ All children under 18 in the UK are entitled to **free NHS dental treatment**.
- ✓ Children should be taken to the dentist when their **first milk teeth appear** (about 6 months) so they become familiar with the environment and get to know the dentist.
- ✓ The dentist can help prevent decay and identify any oral health problems at an early stage.
- ✓ Children should visit the dentist at least **once a year** for a check-up.
- ✓ Pregnant women and women who have had a baby in the last 12 months are also entitled to free NHS dental treatment.
- ✓ **To register with a NHS dentist, families can phone 03330063300**



Top tip – send a letter out to all parents of children in your setting explaining how to register with a local dentist and the importance of visiting a dentist!

Tooth Brushing

- ✓ Start brushing baby's teeth as soon as the **first milk tooth** breaks through.
- ✓ Brush teeth for **two minutes, twice a day** - once just before bedtime and at least one other time during the day.
- ✓ Use toothpastes containing 1350-1500 parts per million (ppm) **fluoride** (this can be found on the toothpaste packaging)
- ✓ After brushing, **spit don't rinse** - rinsing with water will wash away the fluoride
- ✓ Children should be **supervised** whilst brushing their teeth until they are seven or eight years old
- ✓ Guide the child's hand so they can feel the correct movement and use a mirror so the child can see exactly where the brush is cleaning their teeth



Fluoride Varnish

- ✓ Fluoride is a mineral that helps to prevent tooth decay
- ✓ Fluoride varnish is a gel that is painted onto the teeth to prevent decay
- ✓ It works by strengthening tooth enamel, making it more resistant to decay.
- ✓ All children over 3 years should have this applied to their teeth every 6 months.
- ✓ If younger children are at particular risk of tooth decay the dentist may apply the varnish to their teeth.
- ✓ Promote the importance of having the fluoride varnish the parents of children in your setting



Babies & Dental Health

Public Health England recommend that:

- ✓ Breast milk is the only food or drink babies need for around the first six months of their life.
- ✓ Formula milk is the only suitable alternative to breast milk
- ✓ From the age of six months, bottle-fed babies should be introduced to drinking from a free-flow cup.
- ✓ Bottle feeding should be discouraged from 12 months old
- ✓ Only breast or formula milk or cooled, boiled water should be given in bottles
- ✓ Only milk or water should be drunk between meals and avoid adding sugar to foods or drinks for babies



Top tip - promote breastfeeding support groups and resources in your settings



Bottles & Cups

- ✓ Feeding from a bottle puts liquids in direct contact with children's teeth.
- ✓ If those liquids contain sugar, including the natural sugars in milk and fruit juice, then the child is at higher risk of dental decay.
- ✓ Using an open cup or a free-flow cup without a valve will help babies learn to sip rather than suck, which is better for their teeth
- ✓ Introduce a cup rather than a bottle from about six months

To promote good practices in your setting:

- Encourage children over the age of 1 to drink from an open cup or a free-flow cup without a valve.
- Feeding from a bottle should be discouraged.



Healthy Eating - Drinks

The following guidelines should be promoted in your setting:

- ✓ Water or milk should be the only drinks given between meals and with snacks as they do not damage teeth or increase children's risk of dental decay.
- ✓ Fruit juice and smoothies are acidic and contain large amounts of fruit sugar.
 - ✓ Only give fruit juice or smoothies with meals.
 - ✓ Limit fruit juice and smoothies to a maximum of 150 ml (1 portion) per day
 - ✓ Avoid products labelled as 'fruit juice drinks'.
These generally contain only a small proportion of fruit juice with water and added sugar.
- ✓ Squashes sweetened with sugar, fizzy drinks, soft drinks, milkshakes and juice drinks have no place in a child's diet



Healthy Eating - Food

- ✓ Reduce children's intake of sugary foods
 - ✓ Avoid sweet foods such as cakes, biscuits and confectionery between meals and at tea, and limit them at lunch.

Children are consuming 2 to 3 times the maximum recommended amount of free sugars every day.

- ✓ Snacks served between meals should be non-sugary
- ✓ Dried fruit should only be given a meals - chewing dried fruit releases sugar which can stick to children's teeth and lead to tooth decay
- ✓ For tips on planning menus see the Eat Better, Start Better Guidelines



Promoting Dental Health in Your Setting

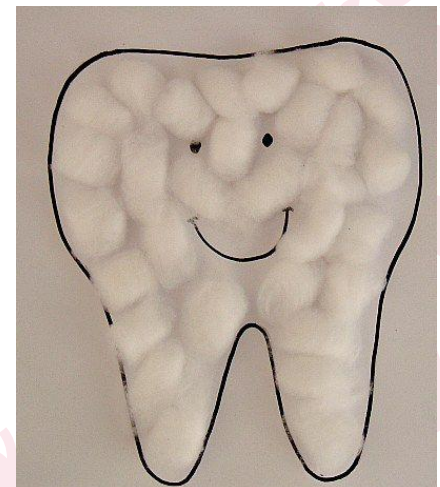
- ✓ Ensure all staff in your setting are aware of the importance of good dental health.
- ✓ Distribute a dental health promotion letter to the parent's of children in your setting. Promote the importance of visiting the dentist and provide information on how to find a NHS dentist.
- ✓ Promote good dental health practices to the children in your setting through fun activities.
- ✓ Develop a healthy eating policy for your setting.
- ✓ Make a pledge to be SugarSmart – visit <https://www.sugarsmartuk.org/> for more details.

SUGAR SMART



Activity Ideas

- ✓ Use dentist and dental nurse uniforms in role play
- ✓ Activity sheets and crafts on visiting the dentist, healthy eating and tooth brushing.
- ✓ Use fruit and vegetables to make happy faces.
- ✓ Toothbrush water play - develops manual dexterity and hand/eye co-ordination through tooth brushing skills
- ✓ Invite a dentist to come and talk to the children



**Thank you for completing the dental
health E-presentation.**

**If you have any questions or would like
to speak to one of our Early Years advisors
please call Healthy Cornwall on 01209
615600 or email us at
healthyunder5s@cornwall.gov.uk**

