PRESCHOOLER TOOTH DECAY
Impacts on Health and Learning
TODAY'S OUTCOMES

- Understand the process of tooth decay
- Know the implications of tooth decay in young children
- Know how to prevent tooth decay
- Know what Early Childhood Tooth Decay is
- How you can be an oral health champion
- How to assist parents to obtain dental care
- Tell us how we can assist you better
I’m not a dental professional. Why do I need to know about teeth?
Why do teeth matter?

Teeth are needed for:

- Clear speech
- Social interaction
- Self Esteem
- Eating
Prevalence of Dental Decay

Dental decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood!
BACTERIA + FOOD + TOOTH = DECAY *frequency*
Bacteria + Sugar + Tooth = Decay
Undesirable Outcomes:

- pain, infection, loss of function
- affects learning, communication, nutrition, sleep
- lower body weight
- chronic inflammation
- psychological impact
- lasting detrimental impact on the dentition
 Recent Research

 Sick Kids Study

 Academic Performance
 – UK Study
 -- Los Angeles County, California
This is where young children have dental decay treated

Surgery under general anesthetic
Tooth Decay is Preventable with Good Habits

- Delay the introduction of sweetened foods and drinks
- Avoid juice
- Avoid the sippy cup habit
- Do not use food or drink as a pacifier
- Have set meal and snack times
- Parent should brush their child’s teeth 2 times each day
- Use only a smear or grain of rice amount of fluoride tooth paste
- Be aware of and avoid the spread of decay causing bacteria
Red Flags

- Parent/caregiver has poor dental health
- Siblings have had a history of cavities
- Socio-economic status
- Lack of routines for:
  - Mealtimes
  - Basic hygiene (bathing, hair, tooth brushing)
Access to care

- Routine medical preventive care – e.g. immunizations, prenatal
- No regular family dental care

Attitudes

- Dental care (doesn’t do any good, should be avoided, not my problem)
- Food (OK to soothe, bribe)
Referrals for Dental Care

- Speak to the parent about your concern
- Does the family have coverage through private insurance, ODSP or Ontario Works?
- Does the parent need financial assistance for care? *
- Has the parent ignored your concerns and the child is in pain? **
Does the parent need assistance for dental care??

- Ontario Works
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)
- Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT)
- Low cost check ups and cleanings, some restorative at Georgian College Barrie cost $10 - $30
Has the Parent ignored your concerns and child is in pain?

- Duty to report neglect or abuse to Children’s Aid

- [http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx)
Be an Oral Health Champion:
Teach children about good oral health

- Teach children about nutrition
- Encourage children to drink water during the day
- Be aware that tooth decay is caused by bacteria that can be passed from one person to another
- Reward children with stickers, praise or fun activities instead of food
- Be a good role model
Additional

- Be aware of cues to Oral Health Issues
- Alert the parents to potential dental problems
- Provide parents with information on dental assistance programs through the Health Unit
Everyone Deserves a Pain-Free Smile
What do you need as support from the SMDHU?

- Posters
- Brochures
- Newsletter information inserts
- Referral information forms for Health Unit assistance or programs
- More background information for the binder
- Other????
References:

Thank you!

- Margaret Walsh, RDH
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
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