

Healthy families Healthy smiles

Issue No 18 November 2020

Welcome to issue no. 18 of the Healthy Families Healthy Smiles newsletter! While the last few months have been a challenging time for all Victorians, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our oral health champions, for your contributions to improving the oral health of Victorian children and pregnant women. This issue highlights a number of newly available Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles resources, updates and information that we hope will continue to help you in delivering the great work that you do. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did putting it together!

Brush along with Tash and 'Chomper'

We know it can be tricky to get kids excited about taking care of their teeth, but it does not have to be a chore. We asked our friends, Tash and 'Chomper' – our favourite smiley crocodile – to show us how to have some fun when we brush our teeth.

In a 2-minute video, 'Let's brush', Tash and her animal friends, 'Chomper', monkey and lion, invite children to take an active role in brushing their teeth using child-friendly cues and gestures, 'make a big monkey SMILE and give me a mighty lion ROAR!'.



There is also a 'Let's brush!' poster to stick up in your bathroom (also translated) and a toothbrushing chart, 'It's fun to brush!' to encourage a routine. These are available for download at <https://dhs.vic.gov.au/toothbrushing>

You can find the 'Let's brush' videos at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcAjB30TLQIEYCK_wPiHgUqvyOVA_0Rnqf Continued on page 2

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This fun and playful approach was developed in conjunction with early childhood professionals in an effort to raise awareness about our teeth, dental health and toothbrushing in a child-friendly way. From a young age, children are interested in their bodies and so it's a great time to talk to them about their teeth, the important jobs they do, and how to take care of them.

The 'Healthy Teeth' booklet is a collection of songs and activities and storybook ideas that offers opportunities for children and families to play and learn together, to create awareness about dental health and help build a positive attitude. At around age 3 or 4 years, as children are keen to be more independent and are more capable of caring for themselves.

The animal characters, cues and actions in the 'Let's brush' video are designed to capture children's attention and help them learn new skills and join in their toothbrushing.

A big thanks to the generous support of City of Melbourne Library Service in us exploring innovative opportunities to help raise awareness of dental health with Tash, Children and Youth Services Librarian at Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre.

For more information contact Robyn Alexander, Health Promotion Officer robyn.alexander@dhsv.org.au or Elsa Mangan, Health Promotion Officer elsa.mangan@dhsv.org.au.

Image below:

"Make a big smile like a monkey", Tash and Chomper showing us how to have some fun when we brush our teeth.



New guide on tongue and lip tie from ADA

Important information for health professionals

The Australian Dental Association, in association with an expert multidisciplinary panel of health professionals including Australian College of Midwives, Lactation Consultants Australia and New Zealand, Speech Pathology Australia, Australasian Academy of Paediatric Dentistry, Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, Speech Pathology Australia and others has developed this statement to provide evidence-based recommendations to guide best practice in caring for individuals with short, tight labial and lingual frena and ankyloglossia.

In the last decade there has been a 420% increase in the referral and surgical treatment of newborns, infants and children with ankyloglossia¹ (tongue tie).

Some of the questions of interest to MCH nurses answered in this Consensus include:

- Can non-surgical management be effective in improving breastfeeding?
- Can surgical management be effective in improving breastfeeding?
- Does a short, tight lingual frenum influence speech problems?

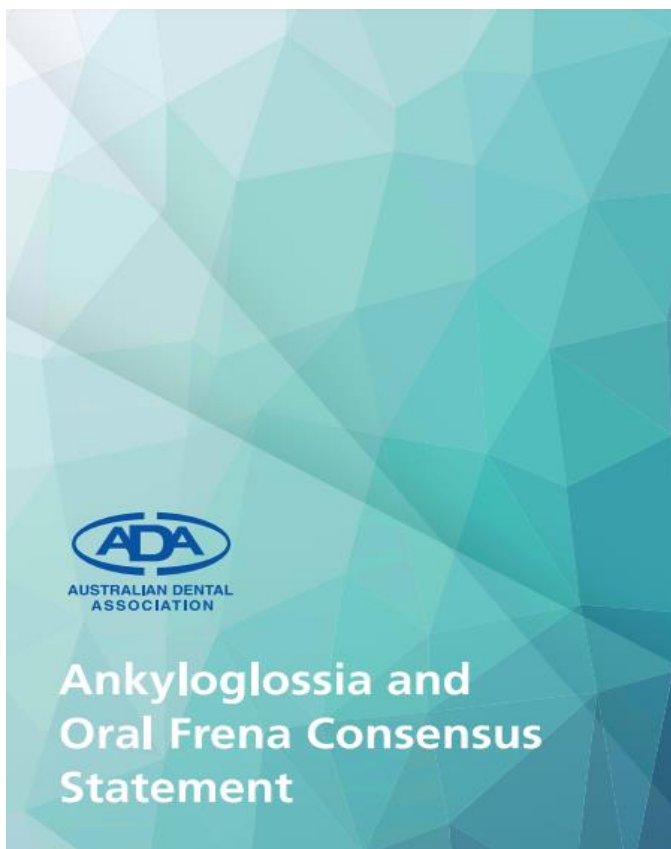
What is clear is that surgical management should not be taken lightly. The evidence reveals both acute and chronic risks¹ that parents need to be aware of before giving consent.

The conclusion of the Consensus was that "Surgical management should not take place without the presence of a well-defined structural problem, which is causing functional issues. Likewise, surgical management should not be undertaken based on speculation about future problems despite lack of current problems.

References

¹ Kapoor V, Douglas PS, Hill PS, Walsh LJ, Tennant M. Frenotomy for tongue-tie in Australian children, 2006- 2016: an increasing problem. *MJA*. 2018; 208(2):88-89. doi: 10.5694/mja17.00438

² Dixon B, Gray J, Elliot N, Shand B, Lynn A. A multifaceted programme to reduce the rate of tongue tie release surgery in newborn infants, an observational study. *Int J Ped Otorhinolaryngol*. 2018;113:156-163. doi: 10.1016/j.ijporl.2018.07.045.



Mrs. Marsh program continues to make a difference:

Providing resources to help parents teach their children the importance of brushing.

Since 2015 the Colgate Mrs. Marsh Oral Health Education Grant has been providing toothbrushes and toothpaste to families attending Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH) in four Local Government Area (LGA) across Victoria where risk of children's tooth decay was higher. The grant is in honour of Barbara Callcott, who played the teacher Mrs. Marsh in Colgate toothpaste advertisements during the 1970s and early 1980s. Mrs Marsh brought the importance of fluoride toothpaste and brushing regularly to the minds of children in that time. For the last six years, MCH services of Greater Dandenong, Brimbank, Swan Hill, Robinvale, Gippsland Lakes and Orbost have been beneficiaries of the grant.



Information received from participating MCH services between **31 January 2015 and the 10 December 2018 showed:**

- 5,356 toothbrushes (0-2 years, child over 2 years and adult toothbrushes)
- 3,371 tubes of toothpaste (low fluoride and standard fluoride) were provided to families across the KAS visits
- Mouth checks were completed for 92% of children seen at their KAS visits and 75% of siblings who also attended. The Checks were undertaken from 4 months onwards
- Oral disease was identified in 13% of all children and (16%) of siblings.
- Referrals to an oral health professional ranged from 22% to 30% of children aged 8 months to 2 years, with a notable increase to 53% at the 3.5 year visit
- The highest rates of oral disease (32%) were identified at the 3.5 year visit.

The grant is valued by the participating MCH nurses. The toothbrushes and toothpaste are a good way to introduce a discussion about toothbrushing of baby teeth and provides practical support through the products. Dental Health Services Victoria thanks Colgate for their continued support of this initiative.

Brush Book Bed Online Update

Last issue we brought to you an **online** version of our Brush Book Bed workshop for supported playgroup facilitators which aims to help reduce tooth decay in young children (birth to age 5). We are thrilled to have received such great interest from supported playgroup facilitators who want to better support their families with toothbrushing and dental health!



Brush Book Bed electronic resources for families

In fact, we have received such an overwhelming response that all of our Little Crocs and accompanying resources have found new homes across the state! Over the next coming months we're looking forward to getting in touch with those who have completed the workshop to see how Little Croc is faring and if there is anything more we can assist with in the oral health promotion space.

With program funding having concluded on June 30 this year, we have transitioned the program to a sustainable model of delivery which will enable us to continue offering the workshop to any interested supported playgroup facilitators. Free electronic resources for facilitators, playgroups and families will be available for download at the conclusion of the training – so it's not too late.



Participants can complete the workshop online in their own time.

Again thank you to all of the supported playgroup facilitators who have shown an interested in the program so far. To take part in Brush Book Bed online, please contact Elsa Mangan at elsa.mangan@dhsv.org.au.

Resource Launch

Here at Dental Health Services Victoria, we are thrilled to be able to launch our updated **How to brush your child's teeth – 18 months to 6 years** and **Caring for your baby's teeth and gums Under 18 months** fact sheets!

A survey conducted by the Royal Children's Hospital highlighted that families don't know when they are meant to start caring for their children's teeth. We have consulted with consumers, both health professionals and parents / carers of young children, to ensure the resources are easy to understand and respectful of diverse cultural backgrounds. You can find them at:

https://www.dhsv.org.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/3137/how-to-brush-your-childs-teeth.pdf

Spotlight on

Social Media Kit

To celebrate our teeth – and the great jobs they do, Dental Health Services Victoria has created this user-friendly social media kit full of great tips, activities and suggested messages to help raise awareness about healthy teeth and to encourage toothbrushing for families with children aged birth to 5 years.

Feel free to share these posts all year round. For more information contact Robyn Alexander, Health Promotion Officer robyn.alexander@dhsv.org.au

get in touch

For more information about any of the Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles activities please contact:

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