

healthyfamilies healthysmiles

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Bigger Better Smiles heads to Bendigo

Oral health is a priority for Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative. Bigger Better Smiles went to Bendigo in April to support staff to work toward including oral health promotion in their everyday practice.

Bigger Better Smiles is an oral health education program developed by Dental Health Services Victoria in partnership with Mallee District Aboriginal Service (MDAS). The purpose of Bigger Better Smiles is to equip staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to include oral health in service provision with a focus on pregnancy and early childhood (children aged 0-3 years).

DHSV has been working with Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC) to expand the delivery after the initial pilot last year at MDAS. The managers at BDAC have committed to oral health in their Koolin Balit Plan. To prepare staff to incorporate oral health promotion in their various roles, BDAC hosted the Bigger Better Smiles workshop and Lift the Lip training session on 23 April. Nine staff participated in the 4 hour workshop.

At the end of the workshop staff reflected on how they could incorporate oral health into their roles including: making oral health education part of family consultations (including oral health assessments), encourage pregnant women to see a dentist, provide oral health information packs, talk about oral health in playgroups, have oral health promotion days and looking at access to dental services for their community. Staff also recognised that policy, resources, procedures, champions, service access and more training would be important to support them to embed oral health promotion in their service.

Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles would like to acknowledge the work of Tania Hood and Julie Priest and their commitment to hosting Bigger Better Smiles at BDAC.

We wish the participants and program managers well as they now work towards including oral health promotion in BDAC programs.

If other Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Services would like further information about the Bigger Better Smiles education program please contact Rebecca Crawford, DHSV's Aboriginal Community Development Worker on 9341 1313 or email rebecca.crawford@dhsv.org.au.



Staff from Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative who participated in the Bigger Better Smiles Workshop in April.

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Healthy Little Smiles Workshops

The Healthy Little Smiles resource kit is helping educators to promote healthy smiles in their services.

Early childhood professionals from across the state have participated in Healthy Little Smiles workshops to build their oral health knowledge and support them to use the Healthy Little Smiles resource kit.

A total of 141 early childhood professionals from Hume, Warrnambool, Glenelg, Wyndham, Melton, and Mornington Peninsula local government areas as well as Yappera Children's Service in Thornbury have participated in the workshops. Ninety nine percent (99%) indicated that they intended using what they learnt in the workshop in their services.

The workshops have been interactive and have supported early childhood professionals to learn more about tooth decay and how to prevent it, the importance of baby teeth and to discuss issues and solutions to support the oral health of the children they work with. At the end of the session, participants left with a plan of action on how they will address a selected key oral health issue using the resource kit.

Both participants and DHSV have learnt a lot from the sessions. Participants indicated that they learnt more about tooth decay, how to promote oral health and the importance of not putting babies to bed with a bottle. DHSV staff learnt about the realities of working with families and the challenges faced in introducing centre-wide changes.

Feedback from participants included:

"The information in the manual is clear, colourful, enticing, easy to follow and covering several topics I had not considered such as the importance of baby teeth. Staff presenters were friendly, informative, happy to ask questions. Handout/workshop questions were appropriate and not too hard."

"The Healthy Little Smiles kit very useful and will use as a basis for educating staff and also resources listed will be great assistance. Enjoyed it all. Thankyou."

"Really well presented and informative, interactive and great setting to share ideas, information and experiences."

Feedback about how the resource kit has been used is currently being collected and will be used to guide the further development of the kit. We would like to thank those who have supported the pilot: Katherine Thorn from Dianella Community Health, Amanda Perry from Sunbury Community Health, Lynda Smith from South West Primary Care Partnership, Susan Brown and Hayley Stacey from Warrnambool City Council, Jodi Nepean from Glenelg Shire Council, Sarah Grace from Melton City Council, Courtney Zohs from Peninsula Health and Stacey Brown at Yappera Children's Service.

Over coming months, the team will fine tune the resource kit based on the feedback from educators and plan the expansion of the roll out in other communities. If you would like more information or to express an interest in being involved in the future, contact Kristen at kristen.gurney@dhsv.org.au.



Healthy Little Smiles workshop participants at the session held at the Caroline Springs Library for early childhood professionals working within the City of Melton.

WHO guidelines for limiting sugar

We all know we should limit the amount of sugar we eat and drink for good general health and good dental health, but how much sugar is too much?

In March this year, the World Health Organisation released guidelines on the intake of free sugars to reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases, with a particular focus on the prevention of unhealthy weight gain and dental caries. Free sugars refers to sugar added to foods (by the manufacturer or consumer) as well as sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates.

The recommendation is to reduce intake of free sugars to less than 10% of total energy intake in both adults and children. A further reduction to below 5% would provide additional health benefits. Less than 5% of total energy intake for an adult means around no more than 6 teaspoons of 'free' (or added) sugar per day. Children have lower daily energy requirements so that means even less added sugar.

If we look at some common foods and compare the number of teaspoons of added or 'free' sugar you can see that making a few simple healthier choices could significantly reduce the number of teaspoons of free sugar consumed per day.



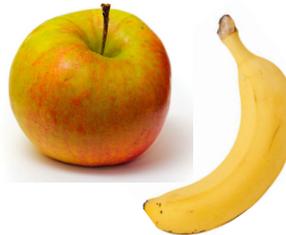
30g of chocolate cereal contains 2.75 teaspoons of added sugar



30g serve of wheat biscuit cereal contains less than 0.25 teaspoon of added sugar



42g muesli bar contains 2.3 teaspoons of added sugar



Whole fruit
No added sugar



25g sweet biscuits (about 13 bite size pieces) contains 1.6 teaspoons of added sugar



4 wholegrain crackers with cheese contains less than 0.25 teaspoon added sugar



250ml of 100% fruit juice contains 5 teaspoons of 'free' sugar



Tap water
No added sugar

For more information: www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/sugar-guideline/en/.

You might also like to check out the Rethink Sugary Drink website www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au and the Live Lighter campaign website livelighter.com.au.

References: WHO, 2015. Guideline: Sugars intake for adults and children. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2015

Speaking to families about their child's oral health

When it comes to oral health issues, it is important they are addressed early to stop small problems becoming bigger problems. Here are some tips to help your discussions with families.

Early childhood professionals are in a unique position to discuss oral health with families but may feel uncomfortable doing so. Educators may feel unsure or may fear offending parents but oral health needn't be taboo.

If you notice an oral health issue:

Share information with all families that attend your service

You could share details on your local dental service and include oral health information in your newsletters.

Consider what might be going on in the family's life

Before speaking to a particular family, consider other challenges they could be facing such as financial hardship or illness; seeing a dentist could be a lower priority for them. The aim should be to see how you can support them to get the best outcome for the child. Be sensitive of any cultural or religious beliefs.

Be sensitive and don't make assumptions

It's important to raise the issue sensitively and privately. When speaking to families, don't assert blame. Many families might not be aware that a white line along their child's teeth is the start of tooth decay or they may not have noticed it or they may already be seeking care.

Some suggestions for opening the conversation include:

- "I have just noticed some white marks on your child's teeth, have you noticed this?"
- "I have noticed that your son is avoiding certain foods and was wondering if he might have some pain in his mouth, has he mentioned anything to you?"

Do not assume they aren't aware of the problem, they may have noticed it and don't know where to get help or the family could be aware of the issue and the child already receiving treatment.

Don't try to diagnose the condition, instead make suggestions about where they could go for help – such as the public dental service, doctor or maternal and child health nurse.

Offer your support

Let the family know you are there to support them. Provide the details of your local dental service and advise all children aged under 12 years can access low or no cost public dental services, regardless of their financial situation.

You might print off the resources on the early childhood professionals page of the DHSV website www.dhsv.org.au/professionals. The Tooth Tips fact sheets are useful as they are simple and easy to read with images to explain the message.

Pharmacists supporting better oral health for better general health

Pharmacists are easily accessible and trusted professionals so they are an important group to work with to improve oral health in the community. A recent partnership initiative resulted in a big step forward to support pharmacists to promote oral health.

The Victorian Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Dental Health Services Victoria and the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch launched a joint position statement on oral health on 3 March 2015. The position statement provides a foundation for pharmacists and the dental sector to work collaboratively to support better oral health in the community and consequently better general health.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is the leading professional pharmacy organisation which represents the professional interests of pharmacists. They have shown great leadership in recognising the role that pharmacists can play and supporting their members to develop the knowledge and skills to include a focus on oral health in their everyday practice.

The position statement was launched as part of the PSA's Continuing Professional Development program with a lecture delivered by Dr Hanny Calache, focussing on oral health in community pharmacy. The presentation outlined why oral health is important, common problems, medications that impact on oral health, the role of the pharmacist in oral health promotion including key advice and referring clients to dental services. Over 180 pharmacists from across Victoria attended the lecture.

DHSV were also invited to support the PSA's conference in April where oral health promotion workshops were delivered to over 70 pharmacists. DHSV and ADAVB will continue to work in partnership with PSA to support continuing professional development relating to oral health.



Photo: Dr Deborah Cole (CEO, DHSV), Dr Hanny Calache (Director Clinical Leadership, DHSV), Ms Michelle Lynch (President of the Victorian Branch of PSA) and Dr Bob Cvetkovic (President, ADAVB) at the launch of the joint oral health position statement on 3 March 2015.

Keep Smiling while you are pregnant

At last! A great oral health video resource for pregnant women.

Dr Ajesh George from the Centre of Applied Nursing Research and his team of collaborators from Sydney Local Health District, South Western Sydney Local Health District and the University of Sydney have released an oral health video resource for pregnant women.

The video called “Keep smiling while you are pregnant” is available on You Tube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5R24RjZiPE. This video, not only entertains but teaches as well. It is perfect for use in an antenatal care waiting room, or you could suggest your clients look up the title for themselves on You Tube. Please spread the word!

Just a couple of points to note:

- Encourage pregnant women to check with their dentist about flossing. The *Oral health messages for the Australian public: findings of a national consensus workshop* (Roberts-Thomson, 2011) recommends speaking with an oral health professional about whether interdental cleaning is needed .
- Also do not forget the message that a child should have their teeth and gums checked (oral health assessment) by the age of two. This can be done by an MCH Nurse, GP, dentist or other oral health professional.



Stop Press: Midwives and oral health journal article

Findings from the Victorian pilot of the Midwifery Initiated Oral Health Education Program (MIOH) were recently published in a peer reviewed journal, the International Biomed Central Pregnancy and Childbirth online journal.

The article entitled *Midwives' perspectives of their ability to promote the oral health of pregnant women in Victoria, Australia* and documents the experience of the 33 midwives who were the first to pilot the MIOH education program in Victoria. The article can be downloaded free of charge at www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2393/15/110/abstract.

For more information about the MIOH program contact Gillian (details below).

Spotlight on:

Information for non-fluoridated communities

For those health and early childhood professionals working in areas of Victoria that are not fluoridated, this will be of interest to you. Dental Health Services Victoria has developed some dental health advice that you can share with your clients.

Being in non-fluoridated areas does not mean that families and individuals cannot protect their teeth by other means. There are still many things that can be done.

For more information visit: www.dhsv.org.au/dental-health/general-dental-advice.



get in touch

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