

# Healthy families Healthy smiles

Issue No 17 July 2020

**Welcome** to issue no. 17 of the Healthy Families Healthy Smiles newsletter! We hope that you are all keeping safe and well during this time while navigating a new way of life in an everchanging environment. As we begin to return to a new normal, the team bring you a number of highlights and happenings that they have seen over the last 12 months, including Brush Book Bed accomplishments, a concerning growth in the marketing and use of toddler milk formula and the welcoming of a new Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles team member.

## Brush Book Bed toothbrushing program continues to win the hearts and smiles of young families across Victoria

In June 2018 we introduced the Brush Book Bed initiative with the aim to help reduce tooth decay in young children (birth to age 5), by encouraging regular toothbrushing at home. The initiative was piloted in Supported Playgroups around Victoria. We provided a professional development package to facilitators, including a face-to-face workshop, resources and activities. Facilitators were asked to share information with families about toothbrushing and to show parents and

*continued on page 2.*



Brush Book Bed resources (L-R): Let's brush – brush along decal for bathroom mirror, It's fun to brush – toothbrushing chart, Let's get ready for bed – bedtime routine chart.

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children how make toothbrushing a fun routine at home. We are excited to be able to continue to offer this program to Supported Playgroups and have expanded the resources to include a new **ONLINE** workshop. It takes approximately 30 minutes and can be done at one's own pace and time. Key resources for families have also been improved, based on feedback from families and facilitators during the pilot, and encourage interaction between parents and children.



*"They [the kids] practiced brushing the alligator's teeth with the big toothbrush... and we talked about healthy food choices and you know, right food choices and the right drink obviously and healthy habits and healthy route and creating routines"*

*Photo (L) courtesy of VICSEG*

*Little Croc* (toothbrushing puppet) continues to be the star of the program winning over children and parents alike.

Facilitators have praised the ease of demonstrating toothbrushing with the help of a quirky green crocodile puppet with a dazzling smile!

Supported Playgroup facilitators who are interested in supporting families with toothbrushing and dental health are invited to take part in the Brush Book Bed program.

Taking part in the Brush Book Bed workshop is the first step and is now available online, while face to face workshops, are postponed.

The workshop is designed to support Supported Playgroup facilitators to share simple dental health messages with families, including toothbrushing and showing families how to brush. Free resources for facilitators, playgroups and families include Little Croc (toothbrushing puppet), toothbrushes, toothpaste and fun interactive resources to encourage toothbrushing at home.

To take part in Brush Book Bed, email [robyn.alexander@dhsv.org.au](mailto:robyn.alexander@dhsv.org.au) or [elsa.mangan@dhsv.org.au](mailto:elsa.mangan@dhsv.org.au).

## COVID-19 and looking after your teeth whilst at home

Dental Health Services Victoria has developed a **10 tip resource** for looking after yourself and your families teeth whilst staying at home during this time.

The resource provides tips on how families can **clean well, drink well, eat well** and ultimately **stay well** during this time and can be used as a family engagement tool for your newsletter or you may even want to use some of the tips on your social media pages. Flick to page 3 to see it!





# Tips on how to look after your teeth while staying at home



Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before brushing your teeth or the teeth of someone you care for. Brush your teeth and gums twice a day, morning and night, with a soft toothbrush and pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. (If you are having trouble buying toothpaste, simply use water until you can buy toothpaste.)

- a. Children 0-18 months don't use toothpaste only water with a cloth or soft small headed toothbrush
- b. Children 18 months-6 years use a pea sized amount of low fluoride children's toothpaste (If you are out of children's toothpaste, use a very small (smear) of adult toothpaste.)
- c. Children 6 years and over use a pea sized amount of regular toothpaste



Hygiene practices and looking after your oral health are important for the whole family especially at this time. Each family member should have their own toothbrush and these should not be shared. If your child sucks their thumb or fingers encourage them to stop. Visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au) for further tips and advice on thumb sucking.



If you are feeling stressed or anxious be aware of grinding or clenching your teeth especially at night. Try to practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques. If you have a dry mouth drink lots of water and try chewing sugar-free gum.



Drink plenty of tap water



Limit frequent snacking. It is best to eat at meal times and limit foods containing added sugars to prevent dental decay.



As much as possible, try to enjoy a variety of nutritious foods every day from the five food groups. Healthy meals and snacks are important for your teeth and general health.



Limit your alcohol consumption



If you smoke, try quitting to protect your mouth, teeth and general health. Now is the time to quit as smokers are likely to be more severely impacted by COVID-19 than non-smokers. For more information visit [Quit.org.au](http://Quit.org.au).



If you wear dentures, clean them with a separate denture or toothbrush, soap and water. Leave them out at night and place in a dry container. If you have an ulcer or sore spot leave the dentures out as much as possible until healing – a salty water mouthrinse can help.

# Toddler milk formula on the rise

Parents want what is best for their children to ensure they grow healthy and strong in body and mind. This can be challenging when babies change from consuming a milk diet with the introduction of solids, and by 12 months to eating household meals. Marketing plays a role in family decisions and as health and early childhood professionals we should be concerned with the alarming trend of increased consumption of Toddlers formula milk – or Stage 2 Infant Formula.<sup>1</sup>

Although the evidence states that toddlers 12 months of age and over do not need milk formula to gain their nutritional requirements, there has been an aggressive marketing of toddler formula, promoting unproven benefits for children's nutrition, cognitive development and growth<sup>2</sup>. It plays into parents' fear and concerns from wanting the best for their children.

The marketing has been to such an extent that toddler milk is now the fastest growing category of breast milk substitutes and this has been condemned by the World Health Organisation<sup>3</sup>.

*Trying to identify what is **infant formula** is not an easy task when confronted with the array of early childhood milk formulas displayed on supermarket shelves.*

Toddler formula is expensive compared with cow's milk. In some brands it contains less protein per serve than cow's milk does and has added sugar<sup>4</sup> and some experts suggest that toddler milk may train children's palates to prefer more sugary beverages<sup>5</sup>.

## Problems with toddler formula

Toddler milk is not needed for good nutrition and is an unnecessary cost for families.

According to the Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines<sup>6</sup> for toddlers 12 months and over, pasteurized full cream cow's milk (except in the case of certain medical conditions) is an excellent source of protein, calcium and other nutrients along with continued breast feeding. Toddler milk formula is not needed. By two years toddlers should gain all of their nutritional requirements by eating healthy foods that the family eats and by drinking water and plain milk<sup>7</sup>.

Check out this [YouTube video](#) by Academy of Paediatrics, Academy of Paediatric Dentists and the Heart Foundation on toddler formula.



## References

- 1 Public Health association of Australia Media Release December 2015 Follow-on (infant) formulas simply not needed: <https://www.phaa.net.au/advocacy-policy/media-releases/media-releases-2015>
- 2 Harris JL, Pomeranz JL. Toddler Drink Marketing: Opportunities to Address Harmful Practices. Durham, NC: Healthy Eating Research; 2020. Available at: <https://www.healthyeatingresearch.org>.
- 3 <https://www.who.int/nutrition/netcode/WHA-Policy-brief.pdf>
- 4 Pomeranz JL, Romo-Palafox MJ, Harris JL. Toddler drinks, formulas and milks: Labeling practices and policy implications. *Prev Med.* 2018;109; 11-16.
- 5 Yoon Y Choi, Alexis Ludwig and Jennifer L Harris (2020). Us toddler milk sales and associations with marketing practices. *Public Health Nutrition*, 23:6, pp1127-1135. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980019003756>
- 6 [https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the\\_guidelines/n56b\\_infant\\_feeding\\_summary\\_130808.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf)
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# Spotlight on

## Effectively integrating of oral health into midwifery

Western Sydney University has integrated an oral health module (based on the Midwifery Initiated Oral Health Education Program) into the first year of their Bachelor of Midwifery. A total of four hours (online narrated lecture and self-learning) was introduced across two core units of the curriculum; Midwifery Knowledge and Midwifery Practice Experience.

In 2015 research was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the module. Students from first year through to their third year completed questionnaires to measure the retention of knowledge and confidence. The results showed that oral health knowledge was retained over the three years as well as confidence in introducing oral health into the first booking visit. You can read the results of the evaluation that have been published in *Nurse Education Today* Volume 90, July 2020, 104457 (free access) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104457>

Healthy Families Healthy Smiles is exploring how to incorporate oral health content into the Victorian Midwifery curriculums.

## Welcome Elsa

Elsa has recently joined the Healthy Families Healthy Smiles team as a Health Promotion Officer. She has relocated to Melbourne from Lismore NSW, where she previously worked at Northern NSW Local Health District across healthy eating and physical activity initiatives, *Munch & Move* and *Live Life Well @ School*, in the early childhood and primary school settings. Elsa is looking forward to building on this experience and developing her knowledge and skills in the oral health sector as part of the Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles team. As part of her role, Elsa will be working on our team two days a week (Thurs & Fri) and Smiles 4 Miles for the remaining three days (Mon, Tues & Wed).

## get in touch

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

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