Oral Health Promotion

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Oral Health

- Oral disease is largely preventable
- Significant burden of disease remains in 0-5 year old age group
- Parental fear of dental treatment often reason for postponing dental visits
- 54 per cent of five year old children experience dental caries (DHSV 2007)
Oral Health

- Marked inequalities in oral health
- Traditional approach restricts referrals
- Evidence that one off dental “talks” to children are ineffective if unsupported
Child health in the last 10 years

- High levels of sedentary time
- Advertising
- Fast food
- Low levels of fruit and vegetable intake
General Health

Child health in the last 10 years

- High and rising levels of childhood overweight and obesity
- Rising incidence of Type 2 diabetes
- High levels of dental decay
Why Promote Oral Health?

- Overall health and well-being
- Prevent pain
- Prevent fear of medical/dental treatment
- Lifetime of dental ‘repairs’
- Prevent orthodontic problems
- Reduce waiting lists at private and public services
- Ongoing Health Cost
Oral Health in Victoria

**Challenges**
- Dental workforce shortage
- Limited access to dental services
- Oral health viewed as separate from general health

**Opportunities**
- Build capacity outside dental sector
- Prevention before identification
- De-mystify oral health, and embed within general health
Identifying ‘at risk’ children

Identifying high risk behaviors

- Using a bottle or breast as a comforter
- Late introduction of solids / cup
- Thumb, finger and lip sucking
- Difficulty with effective cleaning
- Unnecessary use of dummies
- Poor diet and nutrition
- Absence of visits to dental professionals
What is a Mouth Check?

- Lifting the lip and looking at the anterior teeth
- Looking in the whole mouth
- Locating any problems
- Referring if any problems are identified
What to Look for in a Mouth Check

- Dental Caries
- Number of teeth
- Colour of teeth
- Unusual lumps, sores or abscesses
- Is the child suffering from any dental pain?
Advanced Early Childhood Caries
Early Childhood Oral Health Program (ECOHP)

- ECOHP provides an early intervention strategy for children from birth to school entry
- All preschool children are eligible to access public dental services
- MCHN can identify and refer ‘at risk’ 0-5 year old children
The Flipchart

Launching the 2008 edition of the DHSV Flipchart - ‘Teeth: Oral Health Information for Parents and Carers’
The Focus Group Feedback

- Feedback sought on:
  - Pictures
  - Text
  - Language
  - Messages
  - Format
Prompt: Warn about using the breast or bottle as a comforter.
The Flipchart – e.g. of changes

Increased use of ✓ and X to indicate preferred option, as well as use of well known brands
The Flipchart – e.g. of changes

Increased use of photos of children from culturally diverse backgrounds

Eating fresh fruit and vegetables provides children with fibre, vitamins, minerals and other healthy nutrients.
The Flipchart – e.g. of changes

Increased use of photos of children from culturally diverse backgrounds

Tooth cleaning should begin when the first tooth erupts at about 6-12 months of age.

EAT WELL - DRINK WELL - CLEAN WELL
The Flipchart – e.g. of changes

Clear prompts on the flipside of each page to assist in message delivery

Parents and carers can help their children have healthy teeth for life.

EAT WELL • DRINK WELL • CLEAN WELL
Dental Visits

- Dental Visits may be helpful from as early as 12 months, particularly for children at higher risk of oral disease.
- For many children, the first dental visit is about becoming familiar and comfortable with the dental setting.
- Suggest the child accompany the parent on their own visit to the dental professional (they may be offered a ride in the chair).
- Help children to accept that dental visits are part of a regular routine.
- Encourage positive discussion about the dentist (avoid language such as "be brave").
Thankyou!
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