Miles of Smiles

New Jersey Department of Health
Children's Oral Health Program

School Year 2023–2024

Third grade Snapshot!

In 2022, the Children's Oral Health Program conducted the first-ever dental assessments of children in third grade. Selected schools throughout New Jersey participated in a Third Grade Dental Basic Screening Survey (BSS) to get a snapshot of children's oral health in the state. This data will be used to increase oral health services to improve the overall health of New Jersey students, which can increase academic performance and lower school absenteeism, tooth pain, the inability to focus, and low self-esteem resulting from poor oral health.

Untreated Tooth Decay:

Thirty-six percent (36%) of New Jersey's third grade children have untreated tooth decay, substantially higher than (nearly double) the national average of 20%.

Protective Dental Sealants:

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of New Jersey's third grade children have protective dental sealants, substantially (approximately 50%) lower than the national average of 42%.

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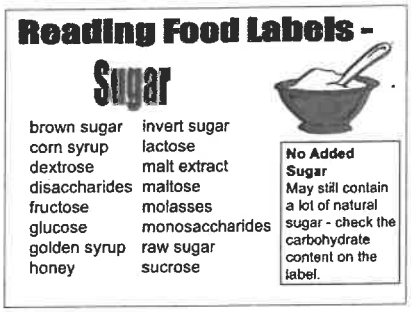
Fluoride Varnish Pilot Program

The Children's Oral Health Program is offering a free, preventive fluoride varnish program to NJ Schools. A registered dental hygienist or dentist will assess your students' teeth and apply fluoride varnish to strengthen teeth and prevent tooth decay.

Fluoride varnish contains high concentrations of fluoride in a resin or polyurethane base. It is a topical fluoride, which means that it is applied directly to the tooth surface. It is simply brushed on the teeth in the same way that nail polish is painted on the nails. Once applied, sealant forms a sticky layer on the tooth, which hardens on contact with the saliva. The fluoride is then absorbed by the tooth structure and helps to remineralize tooth enamel that has been weakened by attack from plaque acids. Please contact the Regional Oral Health Coordinator in your area for more details!

Read the Label



In addition to brushing to flossing, nutrition plays a key role in the health of your teeth. Reducing the amount and frequency of sugar consumed, decreases the risk of tooth decay. To locate added sugars in your foods and beverages, read the nutrition facts on the product label.

Beware of hidden sugars with names such as corn syrup, maltose, fructose, molasses, and more. Students may not recognize these as sugar but can find the "added sugars" on the nutrition label.

Healthy nutrition choices can reduce the incidence of tooth decay from excess sugar consumption. Encourage students to read nutrition labels on the foods they eat and beverages they drink!

Nutrition Facts

2 servings per container
Serving size **1 cup (255g)**

	Per serving		Per container	
Calories	**220**		**440**	
		% DV*		% DV*
Total Fat	5g	**6%**	10g	**13%**
Saturated Fat	2g	**10%**	4g	**20%**
Trans Fat	0g		0g	
Cholesterol	15mg	**5%**	30mg	**10%**
Sodium	240mg	**10%**	480mg	**21%**
Total Carb.	35g	**13%**	70g	**25%**
Dietary Fiber	6g	**21%**	12g	**43%**
Total Sugars	7g		14g	
Incl. Added Sugars	4g	**8%**	8g	**16%**
Protein	9g		18g	
Vitamin D	5mcg	25%	10mcg	50%
Calcium	200mg	15%	400mg	30%
Iron	1mg	6%	2mg	10%
Potassium	470mg	10%	940mg	20%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Did You Know?

Dental caries and periodontal disease are transmittable bacterial infections of the teeth and gums. This can occur by sharing utensils, kissing, or cleaning a pacifier with your mouth. Therefore, in addition to healthy oral health habits, it is recommended to avoid saliva sharing behaviors!

Available Online Soon:

The 2024 New Jersey Dental Clinic Directory

The New Jersey Dental Clinic Directory "Dial A Smile" is available on-line! This reference tool provides a central source of information on low and no-cost public dental clinic services in New Jersey. These clinic services are primarily provided by local health departments, hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). To find dental services in your county visit:

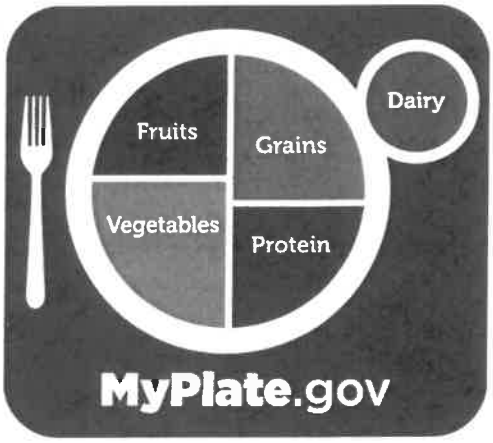
https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/oral/documents/dental_directory.pdf

(Or Google: "NJ Dial A Smile")

Nutrition and Dental Caries!

Diet and nutrition have a big impact on oral health and can change how oral illnesses and conditions like caries, periodontal disease, erosion, and others start and advance. While diet refers to the particular foods eaten, nutrition can be described as the micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein, and fat) as they relate to the body's nutritional needs. Diet and nutrition have a symbiotic relationship with dental health because oral health issues can also affect a person's capacity to function while eating.

Caries and carbs have a reasonably well-understood association; dietary carbohydrates are fermented by bacteria in biofilm (dental plaque), which results in acidic byproducts that demineralize dental hard tissues. More particular, when carbohydrates are consumed, the pH of the tooth biofilm rapidly drops (to 5.5 or below). A higher proportion of acidic biofilm species may result from this lower pH, which may also disrupt the balance of bacteria in the biofilm and accelerate tooth demineralization. Consuming carbohydrates is consequently a key nutrient in the development of caries.

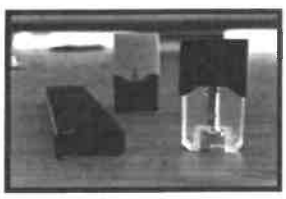
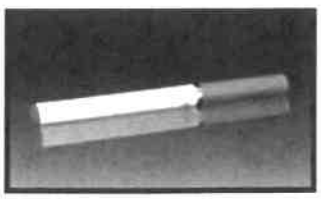
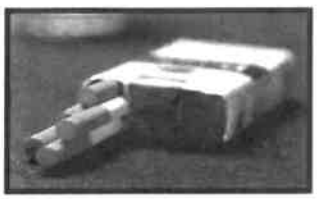
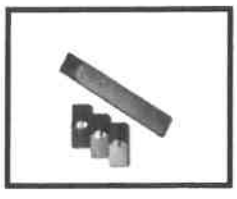


Reference: Nutrition and Oral Health | American Dental Association (ada.org)

Vape is not Safe!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, e-cigarette use is not recommended for children, teenagers, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products. Even in your twenties, the brain is still developing, and nicotine has a particularly negative impact on it. The levels of nicotine in various e-cigarette products vary greatly, with some having levels that are on par with or even higher than cigarettes. There is also concern that young people who start with e-cigarettes might switch to conventional tobacco products because nicotine is such an addictive substance.

The biggest worries are the appeal of e-cigarettes to young people and the general lack of long-term studies examining the harmful effects of vaping on health. Only 8% of high school students in the US admit to the use of cigarettes which is a record low, but a record high of 21% reported using e-cigarettes in the past month. With their vibrant colors and tasty flavors, these gadgets frequently appeal to young people, and many of them have unassuming shapes that parents might not be familiar with.

For more information, please visit: www.njquitline.org; www.tobaccofreenj.com; www.smokefree.gov; https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTipsheet_508.pdf