

healthyfamilies healthysmiles

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Dummies and Oral Health

Dummies are safe for teeth so long as a few simple guidelines are followed. If parents choose to use a dummy for their child you can help them avoid the pitfalls with this simple advice.

Dummies (or pacifiers) can be an important aid when it comes to settling baby. The sucking action has a soothing effect and helps baby to settle. If parents are planning to use a dummy, it should be introduced once breast feeding is well established, after four to six weeks. Advise families that it's best to offer the dummy only when baby isn't hungry, such as after or between feeds so it doesn't interfere with feeding times.

Parents should be aware of the following information:

- To introduce a dummy while establishing breast feeding may cause nipple confusion, making it harder to breast feed.
- Dummies can lead to dependency, especially at sleep time
- Dipping the dummy in sweet things like honey, jam, can lead to early decay in baby teeth.
- Use of dummy during play hours may prevent spontaneous babbling, which aids speech development.
- Dummy sucking can cause teeth and mouth problems if it continues when the permanent teeth come through (around six or seven years of age).



Advice for looking after the dummy:

Dummies should be sterilised for babies less than six months, over six months washing with soap and water is appropriate. Encourage parents to check the dummy regularly for wear and tear, and replace if broken or worn. Advise parents to keep a spare dummy on hand, particularly when going out, to replace the one that is dropped.

Advice you can give parents about weaning their child off the dummy:

Many children will stop sucking habits between the age of two and four. But a child can be helped to give up the dummy from the age of one year.

- Choose an appropriate time to begin, avoiding a time of family stress.
- As part of the preparation, talk to the child about giving up the dummy, if old enough to understand.
- Start restricting dummy use to certain times and places, such as in the car or cot.
- Encourage use of other comforters (blanket or teddy), if these are more socially acceptable.
- Once the child is coping for longer periods without the dummy, set a time and date and then take away the dummy.
- Celebrate the occasion of dummy free with a special activity or reward (but not sweet things!).

raisingchildren.net.au/articles/should_you_use_a_dummy.html

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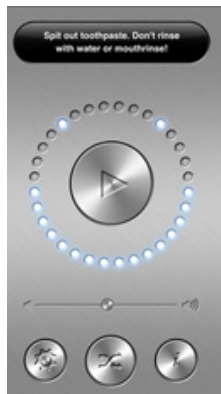
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Apps for healthy smiles

Today there's an app for just about anything, including oral health!

Today there's an app for just about anything, with around 100,000 apps for fitness, health and food — but are they helpful? This description of a number of health apps linked to oral health may be of interest when advising your clients.

Brush DJ



An app designed to encourage family members and children to adopt and maintain an effective oral health care routine was recently studied to assess its effectiveness. Brush DJ was launched at the end of 2011. It plays music taken from the user's own device for two minutes, the optimum time for brushing teeth. It also reminds users to spit out after brushing but not to rinse, sets reminders to brush twice a day, sets alerts for dental appointments and reminders to change toothbrushes once every three months. Research published in the British Dental Journal (online August 2015) showed that Brush DJ, is effective in encouraging users to adopt and maintain an effective oral health care routine. 88% of respondents reported that the app motivated them to brush their teeth for longer.

FoodSwitch

This app gives you immediate, easy-to-understand information about packaged food products as well as a list of similar foods that are healthier choices, by scanning the barcode using your smartphone camera with the app, or typing the name of the product into the search tool on the website. Each product you see in FoodSwitch has been rated using either a colour-coded 'traffic-light' labelling system or the new Health Star Rating system. It's easy to see at a glance how healthy a food is in terms of sugar, fat and salt content.



That Sugar App

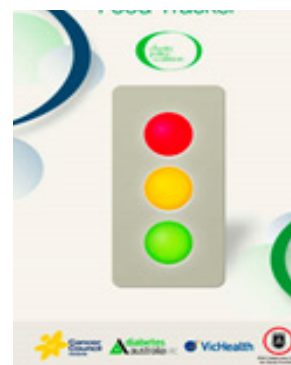


This app allows you to scan foods to measure sugar intake. Find and add products by 'Scanning' the barcode or by looking up products and common café/takeaway menu items using the 'Search' function.

Traffic Light Food Tracker

This demonstrates how traffic light labelling can help you cut through marketing hype and make healthier choices. The app gives a traffic light rating based on the amount of total fat, saturated fat, sugars and sodium per 100g- green for low, amber for medium and red for high.

Knowing whether apps are effective and trustworthy can be difficult. VicHealth has a website of reviewed health apps. Your clients may wish to visit the site before they buy www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/top-ten-app-tips



Visit the DHSV website for other oral health apps www.dhsv.org.au/professionals/health-promotion-resources

Playgroup flipchart

After a positive pilot of the Baby teeth count too! flipchart with playgroups around the state DHSV is ready to roll out the flipchart and training in targeted priority areas.

Healthy Families Healthy Smiles initiative identified a need to support parents with basic oral health education, with supported playgroups offering an ideal setting. Initial consultations with early childhood professionals and playgroup facilitators revealed a need for oral health education as workers were not confident to share oral health information with families.

A diverse working group and ongoing stakeholder consultation ensured that the Baby teeth count too! Oral health information flipchart resource met these needs, and was relevant and useful for the playgroup setting.

The Baby teeth count too! flipchart is an easy-to-use resource with clear, simple oral health messages relevant for children aged 0 to 3 years. The flipchart uses engaging, A3 photographs of children and families from a variety of cultural backgrounds to prompt conversations about behaviours that promote good oral health.

One playgroup facilitator reported *“it’s a useful way of interacting with both the children and the mothers to support a better understanding of how to take care of their teeth / their child’s teeth.”*

The flipchart is supported by a User Guide and a short training session to build the confidence, knowledge and skills of facilitators to promote oral health in the playgroup setting.

DHSV will commence the roll out of the flipchart in targeted areas across the state with a focus on high risk areas and communities.

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Baby News!

We are delighted to announce that Kristen Gurney and her husband welcomed their new son into the world in early September. We would like to thank Kristen for all her hard work on Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles. We also send our heartfelt congratulations to Kristen and her family on the safe arrival of baby Harry.

Welcome Robyn

We are very pleased to welcome Robyn Alexander to the Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles team. Robyn comes to DHSV with diverse health promotion experience, having worked most recently at Alzheimer’s Australia and Diabetes Victoria. Robyn will be working 2 days per week on Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles and the rest of the week with the Smiles 4 Miles team. Robyn will support the work with early childhood educators and supported playgroups, filling Kristen’s maternity leave position. Welcome to the team, Robyn!

Building the future oral health promotion workforce

Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles is partnering with tertiary education providers to support the workforce of tomorrow to include oral health promotion in their practice.

Over the last 4 years, Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles has been working with a diverse range of disciplines to build knowledge, skills and confidence to promote oral health. Until recently much of this work was with existing workforces. Our aim was always to work toward embedding oral health into tertiary education courses for disciplines that work with pregnant women and young children. Over the last year of the initiative there has been a greater emphasis on engaging with tertiary education providers. Several university and TAFE course providers are working in partnership with Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles to include oral health in their courses.

A video resource has been developed in partnership with La Trobe University. The video is a student resource for first year nursing and midwifery students. To find out more see the article below.

Guest lectures were also delivered at La Trobe University and RMIT to Maternal and Child Health Nursing (MCHN) students. A video resource is also planned with La Trobe University for their MCHN students.



Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles has also partnered with Early Childhood Education and Care course providers. An invitation to partner with DHSV was sent to 3 large providers of this course in Victoria. The team developed and delivered a guest lecture to students of Box Hill and Kangan Institutes for Diploma and Certificate III courses, reaching 110 students. A professional development session for teaching staff was also provided at Box Hill Institute so that they can include oral health in all relevant areas of the curriculum. A partnership with Chisholm Institute was also established.

Working with tertiary education providers enables students to learn about oral health and how they can promote it with clients when they graduate. Including oral health in courses emphasises oral health is an important issue and is strengthening future workforces to support better oral health.

Midwifery and oral health teaching video

DHSV has partnered with La Trobe University's School of Nursing and Midwifery, to produce a video education resource on oral health and pregnancy for midwives.



The video is available online to La Trobe University's first year midwives in their second semester and can also be viewed via DHSV's website. It involves Dr Hanny Calache, Director of Clinical Leadership at DHSV, in conversation with two senior midwives, Stacey Gilbert (the Royal Women's Hospital) and Deborah Pidd (Mercy Hospital for Women). Both midwives were part of the Victorian pilot of the online Midwifery Initiated Oral Health Education Program in 2013. They are committed to including oral health within antenatal care and share their practical experiences during the discussion. Moderating the discussion is Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles Project Officer, Gillian Lang.

We thank Dr Michelle Newton, Lecturer and Course Coordinator for the Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Midwifery at the La Trobe School of Nursing and Midwifery, for facilitating this collaboration to develop the resource and Dr Hanny Calache, Stacey Gilbert and Deborah Pidd for their time and expertise. To view the video, go to the DHSV website www.dhsv.org.au/professionals/midwives and click on resources for midwives.

DHSV plays an important role in public advocacy

Easy access to oral health information that is relevant to you and your clients is only a click away.

Dental Health Services Victoria is proud to be an official supporter of the Rethink Sugary Drink and LiveLighter campaigns. DHSV's expertise in public dental and oral health promotion is well suited to involvement with both alliances. DHSV acts in a support and advisory capacity and provides an expert oral health lens to these issues.

The Rethink Sugary Drink campaign encourages Australians to reduce sugary drink consumption by increasing awareness about the sugar content in sugar-sweetened drinks, and its effect on health. It is often forgotten that tooth decay is Australia's most common health problem. With the involvement of DHSV, the campaign now includes a focus on tooth decay as another important health impact.

The LiveLighter campaign takes a slightly different focus. It targets Victorian adults and aims to:

- Increase awareness of the link between being overweight and chronic disease, while promoting healthy eating – including reducing sugary drink intake – and regular physical activity.
- Increase understanding of the risks associated with poor lifestyle choices.

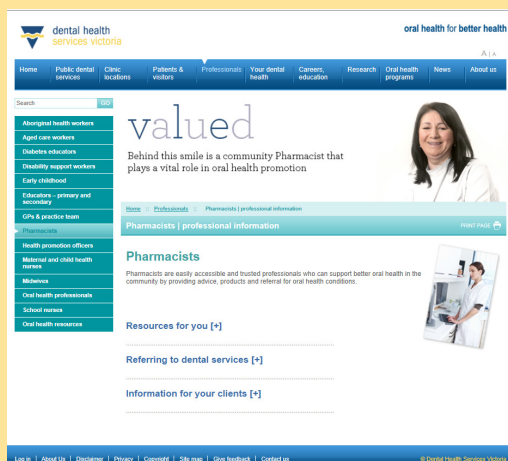
For more information on both initiatives, go to the DHSV website at www.dhsv.org.au/oral-health-programs/initiatives-dhsv-supports.

Spotlight on: Oral health information at your fingers tips

The latest addition to the DHSV 'Professionals' section of our website is a page especially for **Pharmacists**. In our June issue you may have read about the new joint position statement on oral health and inclusion of oral health in the professional development program of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victoria). The new webpage was established to provide easy access to information to support referral, links to our oral health resource library and other useful information.

Our 'Professionals' section includes pages dedicated to midwives, maternal and child health nurses, Aboriginal health workers, early childhood professionals, teachers, GPs and other health professionals to support better oral health in the community.

To visit the 'Professionals' section go to www.dhsv.org.au and click on the 'Professionals' tab along the top of the page.



get in touch

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