

1 Oral health is essential to overall health and wellbeing.

EAT WELL



- 2 Excess sugar consumption can lead to tooth decay and gum disease. Try to limit food and drinks containing sugars (e.g. soft drink, fruit juices, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, and hot drinks sweetened with sugar or honey).

DRINK WELL



- 3 Fluoridated tap water is the best drink for oral health. Fluoride is a natural substance which helps protect against tooth decay. Most of Victoria's tap water contains added fluoride.
- 4 Bedtime bottle feeding can increase the risk of tooth decay. Avoid putting babies and children to bed with a bottle.

STAY WELL



- 7 Regular professional dental check-ups are important throughout life. Children should have an oral health assessment by age 1. Children can have their teeth and mouth checked by trained non-dental professionals such as maternal and child health nurses, general practitioners, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners.
- 8 Everyone has different oral health needs. Speak with your dental practitioner about how often you need a check-up.

CLEAN WELL



- 5 For people aged 6 years or older, brush teeth twice a day using fluoride toothpaste to prevent tooth decay. After brushing spit out toothpaste, but don't rinse. Clean between teeth daily, for example with dental floss and/or interdental brushes.
- For children aged 18 months to 5 years, brush teeth twice a day using low-fluoride toothpaste to prevent tooth decay. After brushing spit out toothpaste but don't rinse.
- For babies up to 18 months, clean gums and teeth as they appear, using water and a clean damp cloth or small soft toothbrush.
- 6 People who have difficulty cleaning their teeth should be supported based on their individual needs.

How you can use these messages

We invite you to use the *OHV Oral Health Messages 2024* as a guide to update your policies, resources, and programs to ensure they align with current evidence. The consistent use of these messages across Victoria will help to ensure the messages we are delivering are clear and easily accessible to the whole population.

Background

In 2022, the Melbourne Dental School, in conjunction with the Australian Dental Association, were commissioned to update the *2010 Oral health consensus messages for the Australian public* after they had been in use for over a decade. This resulted in the *2022 Oral Health Messages for Australia* which are based on new evidence, address the lifestyle changes of the population and focus on prevention. These messages are intended for service providers, policymakers, researchers, dental practitioners and other health professionals.

At OHV we have used the *2010 Oral health consensus messages for the Australian public* to inform our population health programs and initiatives. We identified a need to adapt the *2022 Oral Health Messages for Australia* to make them more suitable for use in our public facing resources and programs. This ensures we are keeping the Victorian population up-to-date with current information on how they can protect their oral health.

OHV adaptation of the 2022 Oral Health Messages for Australia

Our adaptation of the messages sought to:

- Ensure they were easy for the public to understand
- Incorporate values-based messaging principles
- Address any inequities in the population
- Provide actions for the audience to take to improve oral health aligned with the current evidence and the *2022 Oral Health Messages for Australia*

What we did

To review and adapt the messages, the Population Health team:

- Formed a working group with expertise in health promotion, oral health, research and policy
- Facilitated three rounds of feedback from the working group with suggestions of how the messages could be adapted to suit our needs
- Consolidated the messages for final agreement
- Determined the level of agreement on the final messages from the working group
- Tested the messages with consumers and adapted them based on feedback to make them easier to understand
- Presented the messages to Oral Health Clinical Council for endorsement
- Presented the messages to the OHV Executive Committee for noting