



Santa Barbara County
Public Health Department
345 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
805-681-5280
FAX: 805-681-4069

Health Matters Newsletter

www.sbcphd.org

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February is National Children's Dental Health Month

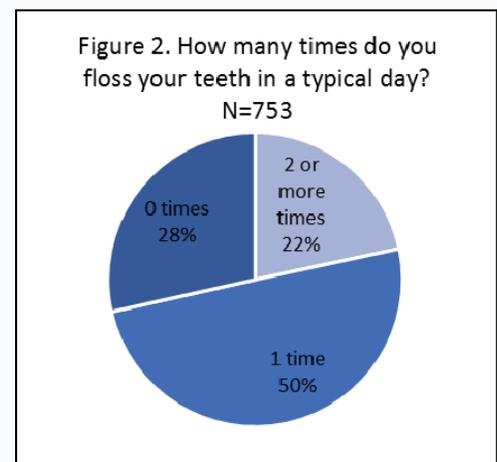
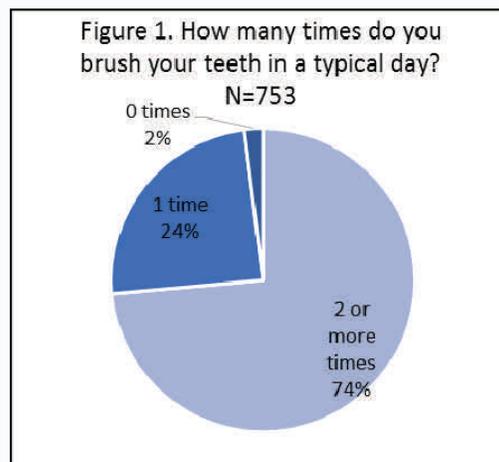
Each February, The American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. This year's campaign slogan is "Brush and clean between to build a healthy smile."



National Children's Dental Health Month began as a one-day event in Cleveland, Ohio in 1941. Since then, the observance has grown into a nationwide promotion. The messages reach thousands of people in communities across the country and at numerous armed services bases.

In Santa Barbara County (SBC) the Board of Supervisors plans on passing a proclamation observing the month of February as National Children's Oral Health Awareness Month. Also in February, due to funding delivered by Proposition 56, educational materials will be provided to schools by the SBC Oral Health Program. Oral health classes will also be taught by the Women, Infants Children (WIC) Program to their participants.

Of the 753 individuals surveyed in the recent Oral Health Needs Assessment conducted by the SBC Oral Health Program, 74% stated they brush their teeth two or more times per day (Fig. 1). In addition, 22% of respondents stated they floss two or more times per day, while 50% reported one time per day, and 28% reported zero (Fig 2).



Not only do these two activities help prevent cavities, the ADA states that brushing twice daily and flossing once a day are two critical behaviors to help prevent the risk of all oral infections. It is important to remember to brush and clean in-between for good dental health.

Some other ways to reduce your children's risk of tooth decay:

- Sugary foods and drinks should be consumed with meals. Saliva production increases during meals and helps neutralize acid production and rinse food particles from the mouth.
- Limit between-meal snacks. If kids crave a snack, offer them nutritious foods.
- If your kids chew gum, make it sugarless. Chewing sugarless gum after eating can increase saliva flow and help wash out food and decay-producing acid.

Van Do-Reynoso, MPH, PhD
PHD Director

Paige A. Batson, MA, PHN, RN
Interim Deputy Director

Ed Tran, RN, PHN, MSN
Interim Assistant Deputy Director

Michelle Wehmer, MPH
Epidemiologist

Meredith Nasholds, MPH
Oral Health Program Coordinator

Adrienne Starr, RDN, CDE, CSG
Nutrition Services Site Supervisor

- Monitor beverage consumption. Children should make healthy beverage choices like water or low-fat milk.
- Help your children develop good brushing and flossing habits.
- Schedule regular dental visits, starting at age 1.

New Year, New You: How to Make Healthy Changes for 2019

Do you want to lose weight or maybe you need to gain weight? Manage your blood sugar or improve your sports performance through nutrition? Or maybe you are pregnant and need advice on a healthy diet during and after pregnancy? Regardless of the situation, keeping your goals simple and attainable will help to ensure you stay on track for the New Year.

Healthy Tips for 2019:

Make goals: Keep them simple and specific. Don't overcomplicate.

For example:

I will not drink soda, sports drinks or other sugary beverages.

I will avoid fast food daily except for 1 day on the weekend.

Anything I eat in between breakfast, lunch, and dinner (snacks) will be vegetables only.

I will not eat anything after dinner.

I will be active for at least 30 minutes 3 or more times per week.



Write them down

Make a list of your simple and specific goals. When we write things down it implants the message in our brain and we are more likely to follow through.

Track your progress

Whether that be maintaining a weight chart, tracking your gym attendance, counting your daily steps, or making a weekly meal planning checklist – whatever it is, tracking your progress can be a great motivation and makes you accountable to YOURSELF!

Understand this - No one is perfect

Don't let slip-ups be an excuse to give up. Just pick back up where you left off.

Create a support system

Choose people around you that are supportive of your goals. Letting them know what can help you when the going gets tough will ensure you have plenty of support available when you feel you really need it.

Don't give up!

So how to start? Visit a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RD or RDN)! This is a great first step to developing your nutrition and lifestyle-related goals. RD's can work with you to determine your nutrition needs, interpret and explain your bloodwork results, modify diets for those with existing medical conditions, understand and help you work with any medications that you may be taking. RD's are skilled in behavioral change and problem-solving skills which they will use to help you develop a plan to create long term healthy changes in your habits and lifestyle. Research shows that active follow-up and reinforcement can lead to greater success with weight loss and maintained weight loss. Seeing an RD also adds a level of accountability which tends to help people stay on track through the behavioral change process. They also serve as a coach to empower you to believe in yourself, despite the challenges you may face sticking to your goals.

Let an RDN help you to "stay on the wagon" and achieve your healthy goals. Maybe next year there won't be such a thing as holiday remorse, or any reason for a New Year's resolution!