



THE CHDP NEWSLETTER

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Summer 2001

Dental Disease In Children: The Silent Epidemic

By Elizabeth McCarty RN, MS
Chief of Public Health

There is a children's disease in Santa Cruz County that has reached epidemic proportions. It is a silent epidemic because few of us notice dental disease in others unless the front teeth are blackened with decay or missing. During the last three years Barry Staley, DDS has participated in screening over

10,000 children for dental disease in the Pajaro Valley area. Dr Staley has found that 75% of the children screened have untreated dental disease and that approximately 600 of those children are suffering acute pain and infection. What are the causes for this dental disaster in our community? Poverty and lack of access to dental care and prevention services all play a part. Another major reason for the high rates of dental disease in the county is the lack of water fluoridation. The United States Center for Disease Control has named water fluoridation as one of the top ten most effective public health measures of all times. When water is optimally fluoridated at one part per million, dental disease rates decrease. This is caused by strengthening the tooth enamel, thus making it more resistive to decay. Water fluoridation has been used safely for 50 years throughout the United States as a preventive measure to fight tooth decay. During the last two years the cities of Los Angeles,

Sacramento and San Diego have all voted to institute water fluoridation. Soon children in those communities will begin to experience the benefits of this effective public health measure. In Santa Cruz County the Children and Families Commission, the

group created by the successful passage of the Proposition 10 tobacco tax, has recognized dental disease as a major threat to children's health. The Commission has funded a comprehensive plan to expand prevention and treatment services, along with a new effort to promote community water fluoridation. Community groups including the County's Children Commission, Seniors Commission, Public Health Commission, the local Medical and Dental Societies and many others endorse water fluoridation as a safe, effective and economical way to reduce the incidence of dental disease. The initial cost to fluoridate a community water system is not insignificant. And there are ongoing operating costs. But the cost savings over time are impressive. In 1990 the American Dental Association stated that each dollar spent on water fluoridation saves over \$80 in dental care costs. Undoubtedly this cost benefit has risen with the rising cost of dental care during the last ten years.

The children of Santa Cruz County face many challenges in their young years. They should not have to endure the pain, suffering and the disfigurement of dental disease, which can be prevented. It is time to make decisions that will help our children keep their precious teeth for a lifetime. It is time to provide preventive service and dental care and it is time to put fluoride in our water.

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U. S. Surgeon General Emphasizes Breastfeeding In First Year

On October 30, 2000, Dr. David Satcher's office released the first comprehensive national plan to promote breastfeeding. The Department of Health and Human Services Blueprint for Action recommends that infants receive breast milk exclusively during the first 4-6 months of life, preferably for a full six months. Since breastfeeding is one of the most important contributors to infant health, it also recommends that infants should be breastfed through the first year of life.



According to the Surgeon General, "low breastfeeding rates are a serious public health challenge, particularly in certain minority communities." Ethnic and racial disparities in breastfeeding are wide: in 1998, only 19% of African American mothers were still breastfeeding at six months, compared to 28% of Hispanic mothers and 31% of white mothers.

One of the Healthy People 2010 objectives is to increase to 50% the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their babies for the first six months. Education and encouragement for new mothers from health care professionals is crucial. Support from employers, and community and family members is also extremely important, especially from fathers and grandfathers.

(LA Co DHS Checkup Express, Winter 00/01)

CHDP Foster Care Program

The Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Foster Care Program ensures that children in foster placement receive appropriate health care, including mental health services. This new, State-funded program began in April 2000. Thirty-three CHDP Public Health Nurses (PHNs) are now located in offices of the Department of Children and Family Services. Twenty-five more PHNs are receiving orientation and will soon be assigned to various DCFS offices.

In Los Angeles County, over 60,000 children and teens are either in foster care or under the supervision of the probation Department. The CHDP PHNs are consultants to children's social workers. As part of a multidisciplinary team, the nurses develop and implement recommendations to improve health care for foster children.

There is great need for the expertise and nursing skills that Public Health Nursing brings to the foster care system. It is this expertise that makes the PHNs such a valuable resource for children and families. If you would like more information, please call Cheryl Alm-

quist, Program Specialist, at (323) 869-7105. Locally, contact Kathleen Buddington, MSN, PHN at 763-8644.

(LA Co DHS Checkup Express, Winter 00/01)

Do Sugar Drinks Contribute to Obesity

In the 14 years between 1980 and 1994, the problem of childhood obesity in the U.S. actually doubled, and recent estimates indicate that almost one-quarter of children are overweight. Various factors related to diet and activity have been considered to contribute to this problem, but researchers now point the finger at another possible culprit, sugar sweetened drinks.

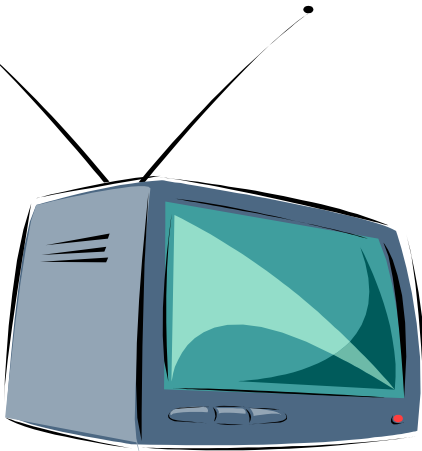
The researchers followed 548 schoolchildren for about 1.5 years, watching their changes in weight and diet. Particular attention was paid to how many sugar sweetened drinks they consumed, which include soda, Hawaiian Punch, lemonade, Kool-Aid, or other sweetened fruit drinks, and iced tea; 100% fruit juices were not counted as sugar sweetened fruit drinks. When the authors took into account the children's diet, physical activity, and other factors, they found that consuming sugar-sweetened drinks was associated with increases in body weight.

But why should the calories in the drinks contribute any more weight gain than the same amount of calories in other foods? The authors offer two possible explanations. First, children who drink sugar sweetened soft drinks may simply be taking in more calories per day than children who don't. Second, while most people compensate for high calorie foods by eating less at the next meal, calories taken in solid foods might cause people to reduce calories at their next meal more than calories taken in the form of liquids. The authors are careful to note that this study doesn't prove that these drinks themselves increased obesity. But they believe that their findings support the possibility that sugar sweetened drinks might indeed contribute to weight gain in children.

(Child Health Alert, March 2001)

COMMENTS: This is an interesting study, and it may point to sugar sweetened drinks as a cause of obesity. On the other hand, we're puzzled why 100% fruit juices, which also provide calories in liquid form, didn't seem to have the same effect. Is it possible that children who drink fruit juices watch their diets more carefully than children who drink other sweetened drinks? Is it also possible that soda might not cause obesity but rather be a marker for the kinds of diets that do? We think these questions need to be answered before we assume that sugar sweetened drinks are at fault, but at the same time we need to work hard to encourage children to eat more healthful diets and to establish physical exercise as a routine in their lives

Not Watching TV, but Human Touch, Boosts Early Brain Growth



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents not allow their children under the age of two to watch television for fear that it will stunt the development of their brain. In the issue of PEDIATRICS, August, 1999, the Academy says: "Research on early brain development shows that babies and toddlers have a critical need for direct interaction with parents and other significant care-givers for healthy brain growth and the development of appropriate social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Therefore, exposing such young children to television programs should be discouraged."

The Academy argues that infants and toddlers watching television rather than interacting with adults, are not likely to receive the attention they need to develop desirable mental, social and emotional skills.

For all children, the Academy recommends limiting TV viewing to 1-2 hours a day of quality shows. These recommendations are based on its concern about youth violence and TV watching.

Introducing New Asthma Program

R.Lee Fitzsimmons, RNC, PHN
CHDP Case Manager

The American Lung Association of the Central Coast (ALACC) has started a new program. The Early Childhood Asthma Initiative (ECAI) targets children 0-5 years old in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo counties. It will provide *free* one on one asthma evaluation, education, and counseling for children, families, and childcare providers by utilizing Asthma Coordinators. The ECAI is being funded by grants from the California Children and Families Commission and the California Department of Health Services.

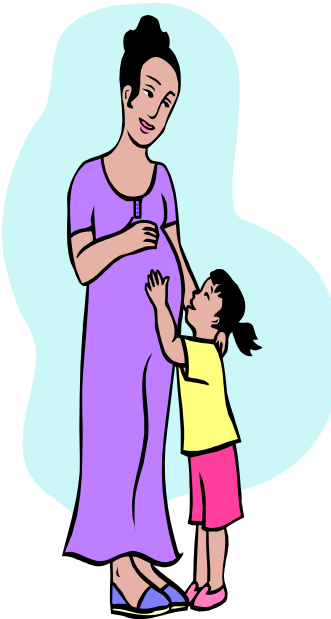
The goal of the ECAI is to provide children and their families with the necessary knowledge and tools they need for successful asthma management. The increased asthma management skills along with regular medical visits reduce hospitalization, emergency room visits, and school absences.

The ALACC has ECAI posters available for your offices. Children can be enrolled by their parents as well as by health care providers. For additional information or to enroll an eligible family, contact Early Childhood Asthma Initiative at 1-800-LUNG-USA or asthma@alaccoast.org.

This program can make a positive difference in the lives of young children and their families living with asthma on the Central Coast.

Santa Cruz County Head Start Services for Pregnant Women and Children, Birth to Three

By Laurie Hester
Head Start Health Coordinator



Santa Cruz County Head Start is in their second year of providing comprehensive health and social services to low income pregnant women and children birth to three years of age. Services are provided in collaboration with Answers Benefiting Children (ABC), a home visiting program located in Watsonville. Home Visits occur weekly for pregnant women and children birth to 18 months of age. Children 18 months to three years of age attend a toddler center four days a week for 3 1/2 hours in addition to bi-weekly home visits. The ABC Public Health Nurse provides home visits on a monthly basis to pregnant women and children with health concerns. Applications may be requested by calling the Head Start office @ 724-3885 or 688-3802

THE ANSWERS BENEFITING CHILDREN PROGRAM

A Cooperative of Santa Cruz County Agencies
“Working Towards Healthy Families”

By Lynda Lewit, PHN II

The Answers Benefiting Children Program (ABC), is a team of professionals working with Santa Cruz County agencies to provide families with comprehensive health, educational, and counseling services. The ABC team provides long-term intensive home visiting, child health and development, and center-based activities. ABC’s goal is to promote positive parenting, support child development, encourage healthy families and enhance family self-sufficiency. ABC also aims to reduce child abuse and neglect, welfare dependency, and interventions by law enforcement agencies.

The ABC multi-disciplinary team consists of the following dedicated professionals: Home Visitor, Social Worker, Public Health Nurse, Mental Health Therapist, Child Development Specialist, Substance Abuse Specialist, Domestic Violence Specialist and Parenting Group Specialist.

The ABC Program is part of the Watsonville Family Center (WFRC) and is located at the La Manzana Center. A Family Resource Center is a community based, family friendly Center offering a variety of services to communities. The WFRC is currently in the process of implementing the Juvenile Crime Prevention Program pending Governor’s approval of the budget.

The ABC Program has three main components:

1. The home based visiting program supports up to 125 families by providing support, information, and education. An ABC Home Visitor maintains an on-going relationship with the family by visiting them at home and connects them to community resources. The following programs are part of the ABC Home Visiting Team: CalLearn, Head Start-Child Development Infant/Toddler/Pregnant Women Home

Visiting Program, Parent’s Center and Families in Transition (FIT).

2. The center based activities aim to reduce the isolation that many that many families experience. Finding support in new social contacts is encouraged. Childcare is available during all groups. Typical group classes are: parenting classes and support groups, play and grow groups for parents and young children ages 6 through 12, yoga classes and infant massage.
3. The therapeutic family support services provides counseling and education to children, adolescents and their families through the Child Abuse Treatment services component.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any question about how ABC works, who qualifies, to register for classes or need any further details. Please contact us at (831) 763-3108.

The ABC team is proud to collaborate with following agencies.

Santa Cruz Community Counseling
Food and Nutrition Services
Early Head Start/Head Star
Families in Transition
Parents Center
City of Watsonville
Santa Cruz County Human Resource Agency
Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
Children’s Network
Family Resource Center Network

Answers Benefiting Children
18 West Lake, Suite L
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 763-4694

Health Resources Coalition
Toll-free Parent Information & Referral Line
800-690-2282
7:00 a.m.– 11:00 p.m. 365 days a year

Have question about your child’s health, behavior, safety, or development? The Tri-County Health Resources Coalition is pleased to announce that beginning July 1, 2001, parents and other childcare providers can call pediatric nurses on a toll-free line to answer basic pediatric health care question and provide information about local community resources available to them and their children.

There are times when every parent wonders: *Am I doing the right thing? Is my child okay? Should I contact my doctor?* Thanks to the leadership of the Monterey County Medical Society and local public and private organizations throughout the tri-county area, parents and childcare providers in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties can access the toll-free Parent Information & Referral Line to have their questions answered.

Staffed by registered pediatric nurses employed by the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford, the Parent Information and Referral Center (PIRC) provides information on a wide range of topics including: care of newborns, breastfeeding, toilet training, preventing lice, treating chickenpox, immunizations, car safety seats, discipline issues, normal developmental milestones, and more.

PIRC staff are bi-lingual and the AT&T Language Line provides interpretive service for over 25 languages. Hearing impaired callers can access PIRC through the Relay Service. Additionally, parents can e-mail their questions to PIRC at pirc@pch.medcenter.edu.

All callers remain anonymous, giving parents the confidence to call the line with even the simplest questions.

PIRC has been providing this valuable “Ask a Nurse” service to other counties in Northern California since 1992. Beginning this July, residents on Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties will have access to this free community service, made possible through contributions made by the following organizations.

Monterey County Medical Society, Santa Cruz County Medical Society, Monterey County Children & Families Commission, Santa Cruz County Children & Families Commission, San Benito County Children & Family Commission, Central Coast Alliance for Health, United Way of Monterey County,. Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital, Natividad Medical Center Foundation, Monterey County Medical Trust Fund, Watsonville Community Hospital, KSBW-TV.

**CHDP Provider
Information Notices**

Provider Information Notices are sent out periodically to inform you of program and policy changes. The notices 01-02 and 01-03 were sent out since our last newsletter. For a copy of a notice, please call Alaciel Jauregui at 763-8934.

| Provider Info. Number | Topic |
|--------------------------|---|
| 01-02 | Updated Information Regarding New Pediatric Growth Charts and BMI Calculation Tool and Training |
| 01-03 | Revised Eligibility Determination Table |

Greetings from the New CHDP Deputy Director

Well, I have hit the ground running in my new role as Deputy Director. I have been doing a crash course in the Foster Care Program and orienting the new Foster care PHN and the PHN who is replacing me while simultaneously working on the State Budget. I am missing Elaine's presence and guidance, but I feel confident that the plans we made before she left will be realized with the help of our hard working staff.

These plans include a dental prevention project in which we will be outreaching to the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP) to educate pregnant mothers in very early prevention of dental caries. In addition, we will be educating the CPSP providers on when and what kinds of conditions can be treated during pregnancy.

The second big project we will be undertaking is the formation of a coalition of community providers to address the issue of overweight children in Santa Cruz County. This is a long standing goal of mine and is an issue that I feel needs to be addressed in view of the numbers of overweight children we are seeing. My hope is that we will be able to involve the schools, the WIC program, the Head Start programs and several CHDP providers in order to develop a comprehensive plan that will focus on the importance of a healthy life style.

Watch for more on these two projects and if you are interested in participating in either or both of them, please let me know. My number remains the same: 763-8933. I look forward to working with you and serving the CHDP children in my new role.

Norene Bailey, PHN III
CHDP Deputy Director

NEW LAB SITE FOR NORTH COUNTY CHDP ALLIANCE & HEALTHY FAMILIES CLIENTS

*By R. Lee Fitzsimmons, RNC, PHN
CHDP Case Manager*

Dominican Hospital Laboratory Draw Station will now be the lab site for North county CHDP clients on Alliance or Healthy Families. They will be doing all of the routine draws. As many of you know, Watsonville Community Hospital closed their draw station on Commercial Way as of May 31st.

The Draw Stations hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday 8:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m.

Children's Medical Services Staffing Updates

R. Lee Fitzsimmons, has been hired as the new CHDP case manager. Lee comes to us from the county general medical clinics. She has many years of experience working in pediatrics. Welcome, Lee.

Karen Long has been hired as the coordinator for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Karen comes to us after running her own case management business for many years. Welcome, Karen.

CCS has bid adieu to Patricia Becker, nurse case manager, who took a position in field nursing and Dolores Cisneros, case coordinator who is moving out of the area. Good luck, Patricia and Dolores. We will miss you.

Please update your rolodex:

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Scoot Safely, CPSC Warns

Dateline: 09/11/00

Responding to a 700 percent increase in reported that emergency room-treated injuries, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has issued warnings to users of lightweight, foot-powered scooters.

According to CPSC data, over 9,400 scooter-related injuries have been treated in hospital emergency rooms so far this year, with over 2000 of those being reported since August. Nearly 90 percent of the injuries are to children under 15 years of age, reports CPSC.

Hospital records indicate that fractures and dislocations related to falls from the scooters accounted for 29 percent of the injuries. Most of the fractures and dislocations were to arms and hands.

The scooters, which first hit the U.S. market in late 1999 are newer, generally small and lighter than the original foot-propelled scooters of the 1950s. Typically costing from \$80 to \$120 and weighing less than 10 pounds, the scooters have become a common site on sidewalks, playgrounds, parking lots and streets. "These scooters are the 'in' thing with kids heading back to school," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. "Unfortunately, many kids are ending up in hospital emergency rooms instead of classrooms. Wearing safety gear can help prevent injuries." CPSC estimates that more than 60 percent of scooter-related injuries could be prevented or reduced in severity by wearing the same protective gear used in inline skating. CPSC recommends that riders, especially children, wear proper safety gear including a helmet, and knee and elbow pads to help prevent injuries.

"The best investment against injury is protective gear which can cost less than \$35," states the CPSC.

As for safe use of the scooters, CPSC recommends the following:

- Wear a helmet that meets CPSC's standard, along with knee and elbow pads.
- Ride the scooters on smooth, paved surfaces without any traffic. Avoid streets,

or surfaces with water, sand, gravel or dirt.

- Do not ride the scooter at night.

<http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/news/aa091100b.htm>



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