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Root Canals: Saving That Tooth Can Make You Sick

Dental *focus*

Holistic dentistry for total health

This month, we focus on the health of our children, from fluoride sensitivity and dental sealants to the sugars in breast milk and too much TV.

SPECIAL CHILDREN'S EDITION

Ensuring Healthy Teeth in Infants and Toddlers

Healthy tooth development begins in the womb! A mother's diet provides the basis for her child's tooth development. So, she should be eating plenty of raw, organic foods and eating right for her metabolic type. When she begins breastfeeding, she needs to be aware that her diet affects her breast milk.

I often see very young children with tooth decay. Their mothers wonder how this could happen when they are nurturing their children with breast milk. Breast milk is the perfect food for infants, but when an infant starts develop-

ing teeth, those teeth need to be brushed (just like an adult's). Otherwise, tooth decay will develop from the natural sugars in the breast milk, when the milk is allowed to sit in the baby's mouth. I advise mothers to continue breastfeeding, eat well, and clean their babies' teeth after each feeding.

As children grow, parents must establish good nutritional habits, since it will affect their children's future eating patterns. Kids will imitate their parents, so

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Newsletter created by Natalie N. Gotschalk

Dental Sealants Not Recommended for Kids



Most conventional dentists will recommend dental sealants for your children's teeth. A sealant is a thin layer of plastic resin that is bound to the chewing surfaces of the teeth to supposedly prevent cavities by sealing all of the pits and fissures. But in my office, we do not use sealants because of plastic toxicity concerns. Plastics often contain a variety of toxic additives, like bisphenol A (BPA), which is an estrogen-like hormone disruptor. Instead, we teach children how to properly care for their teeth through good eating habits and oral hygiene.

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Tips to Get Your Kids to Brush

If you're having trouble getting your children to brush their teeth because they complain that they hate the taste of toothpaste, try these tips:

1) The "I hate the flavor of the toothpaste" excuse may not be the real reason your kids are refusing to brush. They just may not want to brush their teeth, and they're testing you. You have to make sure to let them know it's not an option. They have to brush their teeth.

2) Mint may be too strong of a flavor. There are plenty of fluoride-free toothpastes with kid-friendly flavors.

3) Give them a choice of toothpastes: show them 2 or 3 flavors and have them pick one. (Say that they *have* to pick one; "none" is not an option.) If they are able to make a decision about the process, they might be easier to handle.



4) Brushing without toothpaste is okay. If they brush without toothpaste (and even if they use toothpaste), you should finish the tooth cleaning by rubbing some gauze around their teeth to catch the remaining plaque.

Television Linked to Attention Deficit Disorder in Children

While it may be easy to park your children in front of the television set, there's a new reason why you shouldn't: it increases their risk of developing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Researchers at the Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Centre in Seattle have determined that every hour in front of the television increases a child's chance of ADHD by 10%. Therefore, they recommend that children under age two not watch TV at all, and older children should not watch more than two hours per day.

Young brains develop very rapidly, and watching TV can "rewire" an infant's brain by causing unnatural levels of stimulation. Television programs often change images on the screen at a very fast pace in order to keep kids interested.

This over-stimulation can cause permanent changes in developing neural pathways. Youngsters continue to expect these same levels of stimulation as they grow up, leading to difficulty dealing with school and homework.

Special Concerns with Young Children and Fluoride Exposure

One major problem with artificially fluoridating the drinking water and consumer products is that it is impossible to control the dose each individual receives. Children are very likely to be overdosed because of their small bodies – the affect of any toxin is proportional to a person's weight.

Fluoride toothpaste can be of special concern because children under age six do not always have good control of their swallowing reflexes. So, they typically swallow toothpaste when they brush their teeth. Children will also deliberately swallow toothpaste when they like its taste. This problem is worsened by the fact that children tend to use too much toothpaste on their own.

As we discussed in our previous newsletter, long-term fluoride exposure can lead to health problems such as tooth enamel damage (dental fluorosis), hip fractures, arthritis, brain disorders, thyroid problems, ge-

Have You Noticed the Poison Warnings on Your Toothpaste?

"WARNING: Keep out of the reach of children under 6 years of age. If you accidentally swallow more than used for brushing, seek professional help or contact a poison control center immediately." – FDA-required warnings on all fluoride toothpaste

"Do not swallow. Use only a pea-sized amount for children under six. To prevent swallowing, children under six years of age should be supervised in the use of toothpaste." – List of warnings needed to obtain ADA Seal of Approval

netic damage, and bone cancer. But a single, large dose can be dangerous, too.

In May 2004, a 3-year-old boy in Iowa had a seizure after drinking several ounces of his sister's anti-cavity fluoride rinse. The rinse was marketed "For Kids" with a "bubble gum flavor." (Luckily, he was successfully treated at an intensive care unit.)

In May 1974, a 3-year old Brooklyn boy was given a lethal dose of fluoride on his first trip to the dentist. The dental hygienist

smear a fluoride paste on the child's teeth after a routine cleaning and apparently failed to instruct him to rinse his mouth and spit out the solution. He became violently ill – vomiting, sweating, and feeling dizzy – and then lapsed into a coma. In the end, the child died of the fluoride overdose.

So stay away from fluoride toothpaste! It isn't good for you or your children. There's no reason to accept the risks of fluoride exposure when there are plenty of non-fluoridated options available.

Healthy Teeth: Sugars in breast milk and dried fruit can lead to tooth decay

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hopefully the parents are already eating for their metabolic type and consuming plenty of fresh, raw, organic foods.

Parents should also realize that not all natural foods are created equal – some are very high in natural sugars that could be detri-

mental to their children's teeth. A lot of parents I meet feed their children dried fruits to satisfy their sweet tooth. But though the kids aren't eating processed sugars, they chew on these dried fruits, which can lead to tooth decay.

Even if children are eating "better" foods

than the average person, if their oral hygiene isn't good enough to combat these excess sugars, the decay will settle in. This also applies to other natural sugars such as raw honey, maple syrup, agave nectar, and organic sugars. All of these products support demineralization of teeth (and, therefore, decay).

The best compliment our patients can give us is a referral of their friends and family. ~ Dr. Garcia & Staff