

Slough Healthy Smiles



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Dear Secondary School Staff

Raising awareness of the importance of oral health

Slough Healthy Smiles are working in partnership with Slough Borough Council to raise awareness of oral health. Around 34.4% of 12 year olds in Slough have decay experience. Many of these children will need to undergo a general anaesthetic to treat the decayed teeth with around 170 operations under general anaesthetic being carried out a day, nationally, to remove teeth. These general anaesthetics pose a significant risk to the children and often mean days of school affecting their potential to learn at school and also time off work for parents with a significant cost to the NHS.

Poor oral health carries with it the **same risk factors** as the risk factors for other chronic conditions such as diabetes, cancer and obesity and so poor oral health can reflect potential long term health issues. Poor oral health is generally preventable and Slough Healthy Smiles are working to raise awareness of this by raising awareness the **key messages** for good oral health:

1. By reducing the frequency of sugary foods and drinks. Sweet drinks can contribute to daily intake of sugar hugely
2. By brushing teeth with a fluoride toothpaste twice a day
3. By visiting a dentist regularly

Individuals can find a local dentist by visiting www.nhs.uk or calling 111.

As staff in secondary schools you are in an ideal position to promote the key oral health messages and help improve both oral health and general health in the students that you work with. If you have the opportunity to pass on the key messages above, we would be really grateful.

There are some extremely interesting resources on the GULP (Give up Loving Pop) campaign website www.giveuplovingpop.org.uk including **free teaching resources** and presentations on sugar content of various drinks. Promotional resources are available at the same website in the Be Kind to Teeth section including pop up banners. The sugar consumed in drinks has a huge impact on the oral health, and general health including obesity and can affect performance and concentration of

students. If it were possible to promote the drinking of milk, water and sugar free drinks, this would have a huge impact on the oral and general health of the students that you work with. Public Health England have produced some excellent wallet sized leaflet cards and posters highlighting the key messages for oral health that can be obtained at:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/search>

Yours sincerely

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Healthmatters The burden of tooth decay on the NHS

