

Nursery toothbrushing reduces decay

November 13 2013

A nursery toothbrushing programme has produced a saving to the cost of children's dental treatment of just under £6million.

A study carried out by the University of Glasgow has found that in 2009/10, the toothbrushing initiative had seen the cost of treating dental disease reduce by over 50 per cent since 2001/02. It was led by Lorna Macpherson, Professor of Dental Public Health at the University of Glasgow's Dental School.

The programme, which began in 2001 and costs around £1.9 million each year, sees every [nursery](#) in Scotland offering free, daily, supervised toothbrushing for their children by nursery staff.

It is part of the Childsmile programme, which emphasises the importance of toothbrushing and helps parents establish a healthy diet from the earliest stage.

A number of nurseries and schools in targeted areas also provide fluoride varnish and toothbrushing in primary one and two.

Minister for Public Health Michael Matheson said: "This is an amazing achievement and shows just how much can be saved from a very simple health intervention – toothbrushing in nursery schools.

"This has seen less tooth decay in children which means less toothache, fewer sleepless nights and less time off school.

"By this simple measure, NHS costs associated with the [dental disease](#) of five-year-old children have decreased dramatically.

"More children can just be treated routinely in the dental chair because they need less invasive treatments, so fewer fillings and fewer extractions, and many more [children](#) with much better oral health than we have seen in many years.

"A very big well done and congratulations to all those, particularly nursery staff, who have been involved in delivering this very successful project which also delivers tremendous value for money."

Provided by University of Glasgow

Citation: Nursery toothbrushing reduces decay (2013, November 13) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-11-nursery-toothbrushing.html>

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