



Quality Improvement Activities at the Clinic

By Marlene Van Noy

The Siletz Clinic is participating with eight other northwest tribal programs to improve the health of the Tribe and other community members by working on six different goals. These are:

1. Reduce deaths from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) by educating parents of newborns to put their infants down to sleep lying on their back or on their side instead of on their stomach.
2. Reduce diseases such as measles, polio and meningitis by getting children all their recommended shots by their second birthday.
3. Reduce tooth decay in young children by educating parents on the correct use of a bottle.
4. Reduce serious cervical cancer in women by getting all women between the ages of 18 -70 to have a Pap smear every two years.
5. Reduce the number of young people who start smoking and encourage patients to stop smoking by regularly asking them about their smoking habits and by offering them options.
6. Reduce blindness occurring as a complication of diabetes by getting diabetic patients to have a dilated eye exam every year.

Here are some ways that we are working on these goals:

1. Patients are asked about their smoking habits each time they come to the clinic.
2. Providers counsel with parents of infants as to how to place them on their back or side to sleep, not to go to sleep with a bottle and the importance of getting their immunizations on schedule.
3. Nursing staff monitor when immunizations are due for children, and Pap smears for women and send out reminder cards.
4. Diabetic patients are educated about the importance of regular visits, including an annual eye exam.
5. All of these activities are documented, tracked and the numbers reported to the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board so they can see how well we are doing and provide support for our programs.
6. Share information through pamphlets and articles in the Siletz News
7. There are special programs developed to help us reach more people including:
 - WIC for mothers and infants
 - Health education and dietary education referrals
 - Monthly diabetic luncheon get togethers and quarterly diabetic screening
 - Tobacco cessation program
 - Dental education and dental screenings with Headstart and the Siletz school.
 - Women's wellness activities including free exams and mammograms.

It takes a lot of work - but the health of our friends and neighbors is worth the effort!



TOOTH TALK

By Linda Kreutzer, Dental Hygienist

YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DENTAL VISIT

When should I first take my child to the dentist?

Before age 2. Baby teeth are very important. Strong, healthy baby teeth help your child chew food, learn to speak, and look attractive. Diseased teeth can affect your child's total health. If a baby tooth is lost too early because of decay, teeth beside it may drift into the empty space. This may cause the adult teeth to come in crooked.

What will happen at the first visit?

We call this a "look-see" visit. The dentist will do a visual exam. Some times X-rays are taken, depending upon the age of the child. Usually no instruments are used except a small mouth mirror. The dentist will tell you if your child needs further dental treatment at a later date. You will also learn how important fluoride is for strong teeth, how to help your child correctly keep their teeth clean and how diet and eating habits affect dental health.

How often should my child come into the dental clinic?

For check-ups, once a year. Children's teeth need to be cleaned with a fluoride treatment twice a year. Children will be given lots of one-on-one tooth brushing teaching time. It's the best time to learn life-long good oral hygiene habits.

Is there a "best" time of day to bring in my child for a visit to the dentist?

Mornings are best. Children are rested. They usually feel better and are more cooperative. Mornings visits don't conflict with mealtimes or naps.

What should I tell my child about seeing the dentist?

Tell your child that a dentist is a friendly doctor who will help their teeth stay healthy. Tell them that the dentist will look in their mouth and count their teeth. Never tell your child that "It won't hurt". That gives the child the idea that it MAY hurt, when, in fact it won't. Children easily sense your fears and adopt them as their own. If you are afraid of the dentist, please don't make your children afraid. NEVER threaten to use a dental visit as punishment! Try to talk about a visit to the dentist in positive, matter-of-fact manner.

Your child's first visit to the dental clinic should be a fun adventure for your child. Full of new experiences and lots of questions. Don't wait until your child has a toothache to come to the dentist. Finding decay while it's small makes it much better for anyone, especially children. It's much better to make your child's first trip to the dentist a good one!

ANTIBIOTICS

by Claire Spiro

Antibiotics are some of the most widely prescribed medications around. Antibiotics are powerful medications that can treat serious illnesses and save lives. However, many common illnesses do not need antibiotic treatment. In fact, antibiotic resistance is becoming an increasing problem. Antibiotics are generally over-prescribed. As a result, our society has been conditioned into thinking that antibiotics will cure practically anything. This is not true. The following are some general guidelines regarding antibiotic use.

Infections are caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites and can occur anywhere in the body. Examples of some infections and their causes are listed below:

Viral infections: common cold, measles, pneumonia, influenza, hepatitis, "mono", Herpes, chicken pox, bronchitis.

Bacterial infections: "strep" throat, wound infections, pneumonia, gonorrhea, ear infections, bronchitis

Fungal infections: yeast infections, ringworm, athlete's foot

Parasitic infections: *Giardia*, intestinal worms, trichomonas, scabies, lice

Determining the most likely cause of the infection is very important in terms of treatment. Why? *Because antibiotics only kill bacteria?*

Do You Always Need an Antibiotic?

Not necessarily. Your body has its own immune system which fights off the majority of illnesses and ailments we encounter. When your body is exposed or contaminated by a bacteria or virus, for example, your body recognizes this as "foreign" and releases its own chemicals and special cells to fight off the bacteria or virus. That's why we are able to fight off a cold, because our own bodies are working to fight off the infection. Sometimes the infection becomes too overwhelming for your own body to fight off on its own, and medicines can give your body extra help. Antibiotics are medicines that either kill the bacteria directly, or prevent the bacteria from multiplying more so that your body can fight the infection off better. So you see, we have our own built-in antibiotic system!

Doctors rely on the history of the illness, your symptoms, physical examination and, sometimes, blood tests, and X-rays to determine whether antibiotics are necessary.

General Guidelines Regarding Antibiotic Use

Antibiotics only kill bacteria - They have no effect on viruses. Viruses cause almost all colds, coughs, "flu", and sore throats.

Excessive use of antibiotics promotes resistant strains of bacteria, which can make future treatment of bacterial infections more difficult. If you do not need an antibiotic, taking one is a bad idea.

Don't wish you were on an antibiotic unless you really need one. If you have a viral illness, taking an antibiotic will not shorten the course or change your symptoms. If you develop side effects from the antibiotic you will feel even worse. Be patient. Most infections will clear up in a week or so with proper rest and nutrition.

When Should You Seek Medical Attention about an Infection?

Some of the signs and symptoms that may indicate a more serious infection, or one that needs to be evaluated include: fever, rash, vomiting or diarrhea, pain, pus or drainage from a wound, vaginal discharge, or painful urination. Follow your instincts. If you feel that your illness is lasting too long, or getting worse, then you should consult a health care provider.