



Tribal Members Attend Native Fitness Training at Nike

The Siletz Tribe was well represented at the Native Fitness Training held at the Tiger Woods Center on the Nike campus in Beaverton, Ore., in February.

The training was a cooperative effort of the Indian Health Service, the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB), and Nike.

Darcy Trego, Siletz Tribal Diabetes Program coordinator, was joined by Toni Matt, community health advocate

in Portland, and Norma Jimenez, community health advocate in Salem. Tacey Casey from NPAIHB and Irene Holland, a nurse at the Native American Rehabilitation Association, also attended.

Professional golfer Notah Begay joined the training on the last day. Begay, the only full-blood American Indian to play pro golf on the PGA Tour, is a Navajo from Arizona. So far, he has four wins on the PGA Tour.

Toothtalk

by Teri (the tooth fairy) Coddington, RDH

Prevent Tooth Decay in Children by Treating Their Mothers

Studies have shown that tooth decay results primarily from bacteria found in the mouth. Among young children, these bacteria usually are acquired from the mother through close contact early in life, especially between the ages of 6 months to 30 months.

Independent studies also have shown that if the mother has low levels of the tooth decay-causing bacteria while the baby is young, the child also will have less tooth decay.

Tooth decay is America's most common chronic disease, affecting 95 percent of Americans at some time. Among American Indian children, tooth decay is the most common health problem.

It's very important to have your teeth cleaned if you are an expectant mother or if you parent and/or supervise children. Childhood cavities are a preventable infectious disease.

Mutans streptococci bacteria are passed from mothers and caregivers to children through saliva, eating utensils, cups, pacifiers, etc. Delaying bacterial transmission to infants in their first 24 months of life appears to reduce cavities in primary and permanent teeth. Prevention begins **prenatally** by reducing the bacterial load in the mother's mouth.

Periodontal disease in pregnant women may contribute to adverse outcomes such as premature delivery and low-birth-weight infants. Pregnant women should strive to have good oral hygiene before and after delivery.

Mothers should have an exam with the dentist and get their teeth cleaned.

Mothers should be able to identify high-risk caries behavior, like putting the baby to bed with a bottle, dipping the pacifier in honey, the mother putting the pacifier in her mouth then giving it to the infant, and serving snacks high in sugar.

Parents should begin practicing healthy oral hygiene habits with the infant at the first sign of a tooth. In the Siletz Tribe, baby bottle tooth decay packets are mailed to tribal member homes when a child turns 1. Items include a tooth sock, toothbrush, toothbrush chew toy, mouth mirror, and pamphlets on how to care for an infant's teeth.

A wet washcloth also can be used to wipe the tooth surface. Parents should get in the practice of “lifting the lip” to see what their children's teeth look like. Any sign of abnormalities are a warning signal and a dentist should see the child.

By age 2, all primary (baby) teeth have completely erupted. If the child is not getting adequate fluoride, his or her ability to resist cavities could be greatly impaired. Parents should find out if their drinking water is fluoridated and if not, give fluoride tablets or use a fluoride rinse, such as ACT.

Children should use a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste and parents should brush their child's teeth two to three times daily. Mothers, fathers, and caregivers should brush two to three times daily as well.



Tacey Casey, Notah Begay, Irene Holland, Toni Matt, and Norma Jimenez

March: Save Your Vision Month

Your eyes are often the best windows to your health. Individuals who smoke are clouding their vision with secondhand smoke and putting toxins into their bloodstream, including nicotine, that damage their eyes.

Smoking damages the eye in various ways, including its effects upon tiny

blood vessels (capillaries) that help carry oxygen and nutrients to crucial structures of the eye, such as the natural lens, retina, and optic nerve in the inner-back of the eye.

Toxins associated with smoking may decrease blood flow or cause clots within eye capillaries, thus cutting off vital nutrients essential for eye health.

Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke can cause:

- Cataracts – clouding of the eye (smoking is the second-leading cause of cataracts)
- Glaucoma – damage to the optic nerve (nicotine reduces the blood flow to the optic nerve)

- Age-related macular degeneration – detachment of the center part of the macula (nicotine reduces the blood flow to the macula and cells are damaged)
- Night vision – pupil damage (nicotine paralyzes the pupil and it can dilate as well at night)

Good News!

If people quit smoking and reduce their exposure to secondhand smoke, they can stop and even reverse some eye damage that may have already started.

Additionally, reducing exposure to sunlight by wearing UVA/UVB protective eyewear and wide brimmed hats, controlling

other diseases such as diabetes, and eating a healthy diet can help increase your vision health.

If you have any questions about smoking, quitting, and the effects of secondhand smoke exposure, call DeAnna Pearl at the Siletz Community Health Clinic at 541-444-9659 or 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1659.

