



274 Teeth Get the Treatment

by Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

Siletz Valley School students participated in this year's sealant clinic in April. Besides 63 children having screenings and 274 teeth getting sealed, the kids had videos to watch, coloring books to fill, and toys to take home.

The numbers cannot tell the whole story. One student was so scared the first day at our clinic that this student could not participate. The second day of the clinic, after a talk with a wise grandmother, this very same patient requested another chance. Well, 11 teeth were sealed. Congratulations to one brave SVS student!

Numbers do show us whether progress is being made from year to year. At this year's clinic, we saw 46 percent more kids (63 verse 43) and we sealed 160 percent more teeth (274 verses 105) than last year.

The only disappointment in all this prevention success is how few of the SVS students actually got to participate – 63 out of a possible 240 in grades 1-12.

One more number is important – \$13,630. This is the dollar amount needed to provide these services for 63



Dr. Matthew Winkle and Bonnie McAlpine seal a student's teeth.
(photo by Diane Rodriguez)

children to have 274 teeth sealed, a substantial preventive service provided by the Siletz Tribe to SVS students.

Beyond numbers are the "thank you's" to Lourdes Jackson for her work in organizing the students at SVS. She distributed the consent forms to parents (twice) and coordinated the busy schedules of students, teachers, classes, and lunch.

With Ms. Jackson's help, we have set a date for next year's sealant clinic. Information and parental consent forms will be included in the students' enrollment package, to be filled out by parents in late August.

Next year, we are looking for greater participation by SVS students. I'll keep you posted.



Be Careful!

A Message from Dr. Rick Letherer

This time of year is a safety hazard for children. Being out of school, outside, and exposed to the trill of fire, loud noises, and the colors of fireworks is a strong temptation to avoid safe habits.

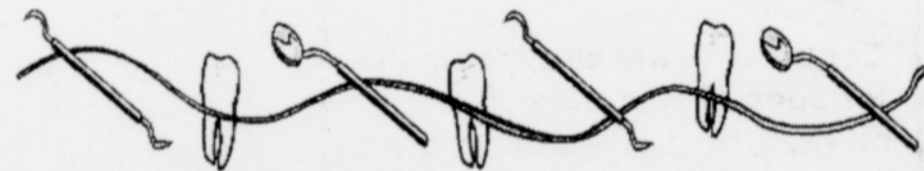
The leading cause of blindness in children is injury. Last year, there were approximately 9,000 hospital ER visits for fireworks injuries alone. Nearly half of these injuries were burns to the head and eyes. Half of the injuries were to children **age 15** and under!

Please, parents – supervise your children at all times with fireworks and avoid a tragedy. Sparklers are **hot** and can severely burn hands, faces, and eyes. Happy Holidays!



Tooth Talk

by Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS



Biofilm Is in Our Mouths?

Yes! You can find them in many common places: pond scum, inside water pipes, in acidic pools in Yellowstone National Park, on glaciers in Antarctica, and on our teeth.¹

In pipes they lead to clogging and corrosion. In acidic pools in Yellowstone or on glaciers in Antarctica, I have no idea what they do. On our teeth a biofilm, also called plaque, causes cavities.

A biofilm is a collection of microorganisms such as bacteria that are living collectively. Incredibly, more than 500 bacterial species have been identified in typical dental plaque, as well as fungi, algae, yeasts, protozoa, and other microorganisms and corrosion products.²

So what is a person to do? Drink water with fluoride in it. Seems simple, but not in Oregon.

Nor is it easy if you're a bottled water drinker. Read the label on bottled water to check for its fluoride content – many bottled waters do not have fluoride.

You can use over-the-counter toothpaste and mouth rinses (ACT, Oral-B, Tom's of Maine) if you live in an area without fluoride in your drinking water, if you drink bottled water, or if you have lots of decay.

Next? Stop drinking soda – sugar-sweetened and diet sodas. Not likely, you say? Me too.

Consider having sodas only with a meal, when saliva is flowing and helps neutralize those acids. It takes saliva 15 minutes to neutralize the acids of

one sip of soda. If you sip through the day, saliva can't keep up.

Another trick is to rinse twice with a mouthful of water after drinking soda or eating sugars.

When you come into the Siletz Clinic, ask to view the poster on sodas. It compares sodas with battery acids ... disgusting!

Another step you can take is to begin using products containing Xylitol, five minutes five times a day.³ A total intake of 5 grams⁴ is considered optimal.

Xylitol (xy li tol OR zi li tol) has 40 percent less calories than sugar and the same level of sweetness.⁵

Xylitol occurs naturally in corn-cobs, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, and some seaweeds. For use in food, it's extracted from birch wood chips.⁶

Xylitol is a white crystalline powder with a Glycemic Index of 7⁷. People with diabetes know the benefit of this number.

Bacteria that cause cavities love Xylitol, but they cannot digest it. Without digestion, there are no acids to draw minerals from our teeth – less chance of white or brown spots and less chance of soft mushy decay.

Back to reading labels – are you a regular label reader? Then you know that each product has the ingredients listed on its label under the heading Contents.

Contents are listed in order of abundance, with the most abundant item listed first. The least abundant item is listed last. For Xylitol to be effective, it must be the first item in the content list.

Trident gum has Xylitol but when you read the label and check the contents, you'll find Xylitol is not the first ingredient listed there. Trident is not recommended for fighting tooth decay.

Here are some Xylitol-containing products you might enjoy. Try gums (Spry, Xylichew, Ice Breakers/Ice Cubes) and mints (try Spry and Smint – mints only).

Toothpastes have Xylitol too (Squiggle and some of Tom's of Maine, look for Xylitol and for fluoride), and a mouth rinse (Spry).

These products are good to reduce the rate of decay for people with dry mouth too. Patients have told me that using Xylitol products helped their dry mouth feel better.

Use these products for five minutes five times a day. Do this in addition to brushing and flossing. One more suggestion, use Xylitol products after eating a meal or snack.⁸

Caution dog owners – Xylitol, like chocolate, should never be given to dogs. If your dog does eat Xylitol, contact your dog's doctor immediately.⁹ Check with the American Veterinary Medical Association at www.avma.org for more details.

Questions or comments? Contact me at toothtalk@ctsi.nsn.us. If you go directly to the tribal Dental Web page, you'll find the links listed below. You can just click on them and explore.

- 1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biofilm>
- 2 www.erc.montana.edu/biofilmbook/MODULE_01/Mod01_Blue.htm
- 3 Northwest Tribal Dental Support Center, Oral Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Manual
- 4 www.cda.org/popup/Xylitol
- 5 www.m-w.com/
- 6 www.blueshieldca.com/
- 7 www.xlear.com/xylitol/how.aspx
- 8 www.xlear.com/xylitol
- 9 www.tomsofmaine.com/toms/ifs/xylitol.asp

Out-of-Area Health Care

by Judy Muschamp,
Health Director

Call-in dates for pre-authorization are July 2 and Oct. 1.

Calls are answered starting at 8 a.m. in the order received. Be sure to register for health care before these dates.

Only one authorization per year per tribal member is allowed. Members have a choice of selecting medical, dental, vision, or hearing services.

Numbers to call: 541-444-1236 or 1-800-628-5720.