

Tooth Talk: Do you have a dental home? Siletz Dental Clinic can help

By Mary Ellen Volansky, EPDH, MS

Home is where the heart is, right? What could this have to do with dental, you're thinking? Lots. The push is on nationally for everyone to have a dental home by age 1.

Why? So everyone has a safe, relaxed place to grow strong healthy teeth and smiles. And over time, home is where our hearts are fond of returning to regularly, say every six months.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry defines a dental home as "the ongoing relationship between the dentist and the patient, inclusive of all aspects of oral health care delivered in a comprehensive, continuously accessible, coordinated and family centered way."

It goes on to add, "Establishment of a dental home begins no later than 12 months of age and includes referral to dental specialists when appropriate."

Most of us have a medical home, where we go regularly for checkups and medical care, where the care provider knows us and helps us to grow strong and healthy.

For those of us in Siletz, our medical home would be the Siletz Community Health Clinic, whether we see one of the physicians or care providers or all of them over time. We know we will receive good thorough care provided with respect.

Head Start has a Head Start Dental Home Initiative Program and the following states why: Tooth decay is the #1 chronic infectious disease among U.S. children. Even babies can have it. And it's totally preventable. Left undetected and untreated, the disease – called early childhood caries or ECC – makes it harder for children to speak, eat healthy foods and stay on task. Good oral health is vital to school readiness.

The first sentence is from the Report of the Surgeon General, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000.

Head Start and dentistry in general want all children to be without pain, to be able to learn to talk and to pay attention in class so they can learn and to feel proud to smile.

Overall, many parents do not know this about cavities. They don't know that cavities are preventable. They don't know that having cavities can weaken teeth to the point a tooth can break off.

Also not known is that cavities make it difficult for any person to talk or for a child to learn how to pronounce words properly. Many parents don't know that healthy teeth help their children to feel good about themselves.

And parents don't always know that cavities cause tooth pain, mouth pain and fever. These symptoms tend to prevent a child (or an adult) from being able to sit in class (or work) and learn (do) what the teacher (boss) is teaching (requesting) in class (or at work).

We at the Siletz Dental Clinic want you and your children to have a dental home by the time each person is 12 months old. We want each of you to have a dental home where you know you will be safe. Home is where you can relax and grow strong. Home is anywhere you have all these things, especially when it is a home visited every six months.

SVS Sealant Clinic Update

We had two new volunteers that I did not mention in my February article, Rusty Butler and Kelley Ellis, who stepped in at the last minute because of emergencies that kept others away. Thank you for stepping in and filling a need; we at the Siletz Dental Clinic appreciate you a bunch.

We had two new volunteers from Siletz Valley School, Tracy Marshall and Candice Smith. These two courageous



Courtesy photo

Jamie Helms and Britany Robertson, two of 173 students examined during the Sealant Clinic, win Sonicare toothbrushes.

volunteers spent the three days of this clinic either supervising children while they waited or rode with them from school and back. Your presence and grace made a difference we noticed.

Winners of the Sonicare toothbrushes were Jamie Helms, Britany Robertson, Julian Gove, Tasia Zilger and Chloe Oliphant. Thanks for participating in this year's Sealant Clinic.

We saw 173 students over three days. Seven hundred eighty-three sealants were applied, 168 fluoride varnishes were applied and all were screened.

Decay was found on 238 teeth, supporting the need to having a dental home and for visiting that dental home regularly.

What was surprising were the 194 teeth that belonged to Tribal children. Please help us achieve dental homes for all children in our community. If you're a parent or guardian of a child, get them to a dentist.

Parents can apply for the Oregon Health Plan or at least learn if you qualify. If you don't, other programs are available. Give me a call 541-444-9640 or 800-648-0449, ext. 1640; or those at the Oregon Health Plan can help.

For more information about the Siletz Tribe, please visit ctsi.nsn.us.

Siletz Valley students, families celebrate Dr. Seuss with week of activities

About 150 people enjoyed a night of Dr. Seuss-related activities at Siletz Valley School on Feb. 28, held in conjunction with the school's annual Title 1 program family meeting.

This event came after a weeklong Dr. Seuss-themed "spirit week."

Families enjoyed dinner (thanks to Subway and Pepsi for their donations), then parents attended the meeting while students participated in three different Dr. Seuss-related activities.

Students made oobleck after reading Dr. Seuss' *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, watched *The Lorax* and ate popcorn, and made several paper crafts relating to phonics and emergent reading.

Michal Crouch, who works in the school library, led the Scholastic book fair, which was open for both students and families to shop. Crouch's daughters and husband attended and he came dressed as Curious George for the event.



Courtesy photo

Laurie Beutler and the Siletz Valley School second-grade class wear hats and bow ties to celebrate a Dr. Seuss-themed week.