

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. Communications Toolkit

Background

Early childhood caries, or tooth decay, is the most common chronic disease among children in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) information on [Dental Caries](#). Early childhood caries is an infectious disease that can begin as early as teeth appear (usually around six months) and progresses rapidly. This type of decay can cause severe pain to the child and can affect speech, eating, sleeping, learning and playing.

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. is a community-centered initiative based on the notion that prevention of early dental disease begins during pregnancy and is most effective in the first three years of life. The initiative provides resources and education to pregnant women, expecting/new parents and caregivers of children up to the age of three.

The campaign is geared toward communities of color and recent immigrants, and is part of the larger statewide Early Dental Disease Prevention Initiative (EDDPI), which the Minnesota Legislature called for in 2015.

The [Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby.](#) campaign is intended to educate pregnant women and the parents/caregivers of infants and toddlers about early dental disease prevention to avoid tooth decay. The campaign uses motivational interviewing techniques and educational materials (detailed in this document) to deliver key messages. Oral hygiene kits are also distributed as incentives and contain the following items: age-appropriate toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, timer, fluoride varnish card, and educational inserts.

Objective

All Minnesota children enter school without early childhood tooth decay.

- Parents/caregivers bring children to a primary care provider or dentist at first tooth
- Lower the burden that dental disease has on health care spending and infrastructure
- Decrease overall cases and lower impact of early tooth decay through oral health promotion and grassroots efforts

Primary Audience

Partners:

- Primary care providers
- Dental providers
- Community organizations
- Head Starts
- Public health agencies

Secondary Audience

Communities

- Parents/caregivers of children newborn to age 3
- Pregnant women
- Communities of color and recent immigrants

Five Key Messages

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. focuses on five key messages that take a whole person approach to addressing early childhood caries. The messages were designed with the collaborative input of community members and dental, medical and public health professionals.. The five key messages are in line with national oral health recommendations.

1. Understand the value of prenatal oral health
2. Check and clean your baby's teeth to prevent cavities
3. Protect your baby's teeth with fluoride
4. Feed your baby healthy food
5. Take your baby to a doctor or a dentist when the first tooth appears, or no later than his/her first birthday

Supporting Data

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) report [The State of Little Teeth \(PDF\)](#), more than one-third of children have early childhood caries by the time they enter kindergarten.

AAPD also cites [Early Childhood Caries \(ECC\) \(PDF\)](#) as being:

- Five times more common than asthma
- Four times more common than early childhood obesity
- 20 times more common than diabetes

Many children with this type of decay require operations to treat the disease that may range anywhere from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per child per year. And even though the disease is common and expensive to treat, the good news is that it's preventable.

Campaign Materials

Use these campaign materials to promote awareness of preventive oral health habits. The print materials can be downloaded for free and oral hygiene materials can be ordered through an MDH vendor for low costs. For more information or to access these materials, complete this brief [survey](#).

Getting started

Follow these four steps to get your awareness campaign started.

1. Determine the best media strategies that fit within your budget.
2. Determine the best channels of communication in your community.
3. Create a content calendar for your dissemination plan – see template on page 4.
4. Execute your plan.

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. oral health kits



Actual size – 5 x 9.5 inches

These kits contain an adult tooth brush, child tooth brush, a two-minute timer and three flossers. Inside the kits, a Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. key message card and a fluoride varnish record should also be included. More information about those materials follows in the next section.

The kits can serve as an incentive for families and to promote good oral hygiene practices. It is best to explain each item's purpose and demonstrate how and how often they should be used.

The Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. oral health kits are available through a vendor. Please complete this brief [survey](#) for more information.

Print materials

These print materials are available for you to download for free after completing a brief [survey](#). It is recommended you use a professional printer to ensure quality.

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. key message insert



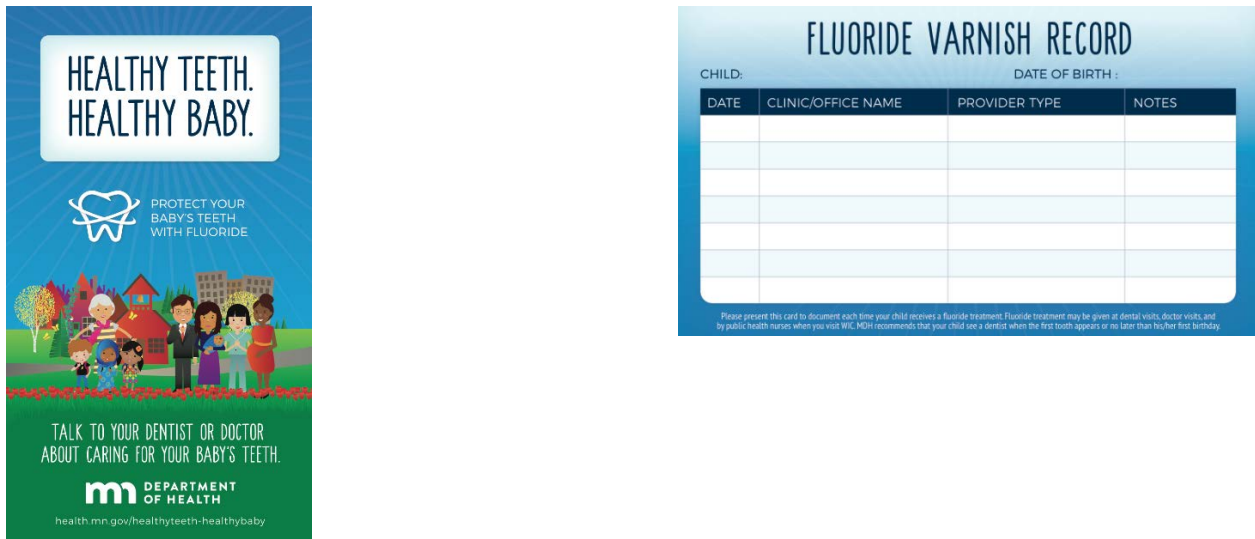
Actual size – 3.7 x 8.5 inches

The Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. key message insert displays the five key messages.

When distributing the Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. oral health kits, the insert should be placed in the main pocket.

We recommend that you print the key message insert on heavy cardstock.

Fluoride varnish card



Actual size – 2 x 3.5 inches

Fluoride varnish can be applied many places, at the clinic, WIC site or dental office. The fluoride varnish card is the size of a business card and intended to be carried in a wallet. The card should

make it easy for parents/caregivers and health care providers track applications. The fluoride varnish card should be given parents/caregivers with instructions to bring and present it at all of their child's medical and dental appointments.

When distributing the Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. oral health kits, the fluoride varnish card should be inserted into the outside pocket.

We recommend that you print the fluoride varnish card insert on heavy cardstock.

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. key messages poster



Actual size – 11 x 13 inches

The Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. posters display the five key messages. Possible poster locations include:

- Grocery stores
- Pharmacies
- Churches
- Clinics
- Community centers

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. banner

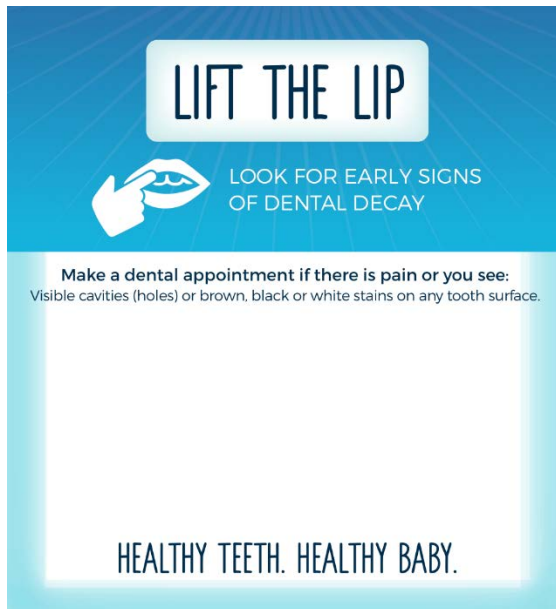


Actual size – 32.5 x 79 inches (banner graphic) 33 x 79 inches (retractable roll up banner stand)

The Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. banner displays the five key messages. The banner can be displayed in a clinic or community setting or used during a community outreach event.

We recommend the banner is printed on a retractable banner with stand as pictured above.

Lift the lip card



Actual size – 3.7 x 4 inches

The lift the lip card serves as a reminder to parents/caregiver to check their child's teeth under their top lip for signs of decay. Signs of decay are white or brown spots that often form at the base of the gums. The card also encourages the parent/caregiver to make a dental appointment if there is pain or signs of decay.

It can be printed on paper or card stock, or as mirror cling on plastic film.

Healthy Teeth. Healthy Baby. postcard



Actual size – 3.7 x 4 inches

The Healthy. Teeth. Healthy Baby. card encourages parents/caregivers to talk to a dentist or health care provider about caring for baby's teeth. It can also be printed as a sticker to be used as an incentive.

Print advertising

Print advertising can be an effective way to reach your audience, especially with smaller, localized publications like a local newspaper or magazine. Your print ad costs will depend on many things: the size of your ad(s), what publication(s) you use, what sections of the paper(s) you want your ads in, the frequency with which you run the ads and whether you use color.

Other publication types in your community may also be a good spot to place an ad.

- Your hospital or clinic publications
- Community newsletters and calendars
- City publications
- Colleges and university publications

Build a list of publications that will best reach your target audience and reach out to those publications to find out about costs, publication dates and submission deadlines.

Social media

Find out which social media sites your organization supports and how you can submit content for those platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc. Posting on social media is an important component of any awareness strategy. Facebook can also be an affordable paid media strategy. You can invest as little as \$20 to boost a post or push out an ad, and it allows you to target your message to your specific audience.

Your social media or communications coordinator can help you with post timing, audience selection and platform selection.

Facebook and Twitter starters

Early childhood caries is the most common chronic disease among children in the U.S. according to the CDC.

Early dental disease can begin as early as teeth appear (usually around six months) and progresses rapidly.

Tooth decay can cause severe pain to infants and toddlers. It can even affect speech, eating, sleeping, learning and playing.

Take your baby to a doctor or a dentist when the first tooth appears, or no later than his/her first birthday.

Good oral health habits should start early! If you are pregnant, be sure to get a dental check up to protect your and your baby's health.

Check and clean your baby's teeth to prevent cavities every day.

Protect your baby's teeth with fluoride.

Evaluation

The Minnesota Department of Health Oral Health Unit can provide resources and support for evaluating the effectiveness of your early dental disease awareness campaign. For more information, please contact Erin McHenry at erin.mchenry@state.mn.us

Content Calendar Template

	Print ads	Public relations	Out of home ads	Digital – Social	Print materials
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					