

Health Department Media Release

Study: Tooth decay in children linked to sugary diet and poor hygiene



The School Dental Services (SDS) has reported that tooth care remains a problem among children and that the trend does not seem to improve as they get older.

Citing the results from a survey conducted last year, Senior Dental Therapist Kathleen Ernesta said that the majority of children aged six had an average of four affected teeth while the 12 year olds suffered decay in between one and two teeth per child. In the 15 year olds signs of decay were present, on average, in three teeth per child.

Mrs Ernesta said that the condition of our children's teeth is a result of bad dietary and tooth cleaning habits. According to the survey 83.3 % of children aged six have plaques while up to 91.2% consume sugary foods at least once a day. Over eighty percent of these children consume these sugary foods in between meals. The percentages of plaque in the 1 and 15 year olds are just as high.

The survey results will provide the basis to develop and implement appropriate programmes on dental health.