



Brush Up on Oral Health

September 2018

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Did You Know?

- **Dental hygienists receive clinical education and training to help promote oral health and prevent oral disease.**
- **Every state has a dental hygienist liaison (DHL) to promote good oral health among Head Start participants.**
- **To contact the DHL in your state, send a message to health@ecetta.info.**



Dental Hygienist Liaison Program

Dental hygienists play an important role in promoting oral health and preventing oral disease. Because of this role, the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness (NCECHW), working in partnership with the American Dental Hygienists' Association, created the DHL program. Under the DHL program, one dental hygienist from each state volunteers to help promote oral health for pregnant women and children enrolled in Head Start.

This issue of *Brush Up on Oral Health* describes the role of DHLs and how they can help staff promote oral health and prevent oral disease in Head Start programs. A recipe for a healthy snack that can be made in a Head Start classroom or at home is also included.

Role of the Dental Hygienist Liaison

DHLs provide a communication link between NCECHW and Head Start programs in their states. DHLs work with state and local organizations to solve problems related to access to oral health care for pregnant women and children. They also share information and resources about promoting oral health and preventing oral disease with program staff and families.

Dental Hygienist Liaisons and the Promotion of Oral Health

DHLs can help promote oral health in following ways:

- Collaborate with state organizations and offices such as oral health programs and Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCOs). For example, DHLs can work with HSSCOs to identify oral health needs and activities for local Head Start programs.
- Share information about the importance of oral health and regular oral health visits, good nutrition and oral hygiene practices, and oral-injury-prevention strategies with program staff.
- Help Head Start staff identify and establish dental homes for pregnant women and children, encourage pregnant women to get all needed oral health care, and encourage parents to get all needed oral health care for their child and themselves.
- Provide or work with a local oral health professional to deliver:
 - Training for center-based and home visiting staff on establishing partnerships to improve oral health for pregnant women and children and engaging parents to promote oral health. Training may also focus on preventive practices. For example, topics could be brushing with fluoride toothpaste, drinking fluoridated tap water, and receiving fluoride varnish applications.
 - Oral-health-education sessions for families.
 - Fluoride varnish applications for children.
- Serve on Head Start health services advisory committees or oral health advisory boards and coalitions.
- Meet with state and local oral health professionals to share information about Head Start's commitment to oral health and about assistance available to help program participants get oral health care.
- Share resources (e.g., educational materials, contact information for oral health professionals) with Head Start program staff and families.

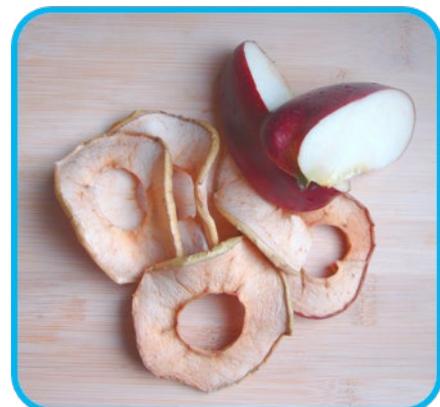


Cook's Corner: Dried Apple Rings

Here is a delicious healthy snack that staff and children can make in a Head Start classroom or at home with their families.

Ingredients

- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 quart water
- 5 apples, washed and cored
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon



Directions

1. Mix lemon juice and water.
2. Slice apples thinly (¼ inch thick).
3. Dip apple slices into lemon juice and water mixture to prevent slices from turning brown.
4. Remove slices from water and pat dry.
5. Sprinkle slices with ground cinnamon.
6. Arrange slices on wire baking sheet or cooling rack and put in oven. Or put slices directly on clean oven racks.
7. Set oven at lowest temperature, about 150°F, and prop door open to allow air to circulate and moisture to escape oven.
8. Bake 5 to 8 hours until slices feel dry and leathery.

Makes 28 servings

Safety tip: An adult should slice the ingredients. To prevent burns, young children should not use an oven.

Contact Us

The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness welcomes your feedback on this issue, as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to health@ecetta.info or call 866-763-6481.

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