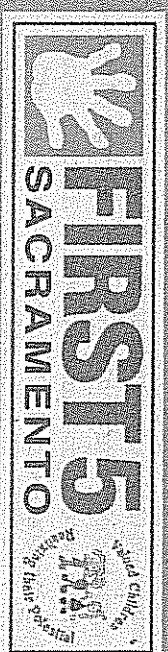


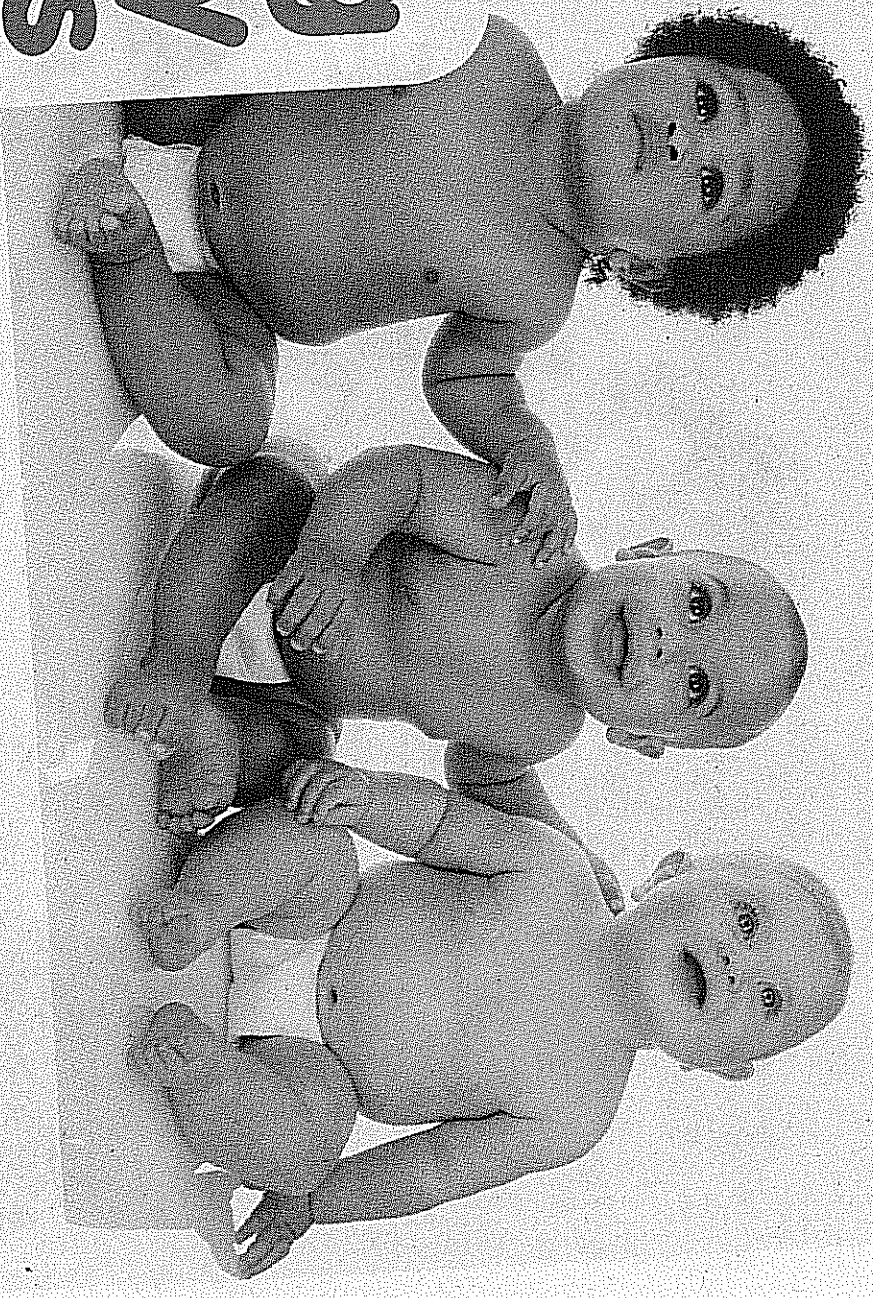


# Oral Health *Begins* At Birth



A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO SACRAMENTO NEWS & REVIEW

# Creating Healthy Smiles



## First 5 Sacramento Improves Children's Oral Health

by Mike Blount

### Oral Health Snapshot\*

**50%** of California's 2- to 5-year-olds have never received dental care.

**50%** of California kindergartners have dental decay.

California is ranked the **3rd** worst state in the nation for dental decay among kindergartners.

**\$5 million** was allocated by First 5 Sacramento to fund nonprofit full-service dental clinics and mobile dental programs in Sacramento County.

**\$16.6 million** was allocated by First 5 Sacramento to increase fluoridation within Sacramento County.

\*Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Center for Oral Health, First 5 Sacramento Commission.

For some families, however, access to dental care can be a huge financial hurdle especially for those who are uninsured. First 5 Sacramento aims to increase dental care access to those families by allocating \$5 million to fund nonprofit full-service dental clinics, including program and construction costs in Sacramento County.

First 5 Sacramento allocated \$16.6 million to increase fluoridation within the county to invest in the health of area residents. Water fluoridation significantly hinders tooth decay, and communities that have it experience considerably lower rates of tooth decay in their population. Under this plan, 80 percent of children will live within a fluoridated water district by 2015.

**"Improving access to oral health resources is one of First 5 Sacramento's missions and it ensures healthy development of the youngest among us."**

-Phil Serra  
Sacramento County Supervisor  
First 5 Commission Chair

The First 5 Sacramento Commission is one of 58 First 5 commissions throughout California. Each was created after California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on tobacco products to support programs for expectant parents and 0-to-5-year-old children. First 5 Commissions are designed to provide unique localized services for each county.

A Special Advertising Supplement to Sacramento News & Review

**T**ooth decay affects children in the United States more than any other chronic infectious disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In California, it is estimated that over half of the state's 2-to-5-year-olds have never received dental care. Even worse, over 50 percent of kindergartners have dental decay. In 2007, the Center for Oral Health ranked California the third-worst state in the nation for dental decay among kindergartners. Proper dental care is essential to a child's overall growth and development. Besides pain and discomfort, poor oral health can also lead to impaired speech development, poor sleep, an inability to concentrate and a lower self-esteem for children. The good news is that all of this is preventable. With regular dental visits, preventative care and proper dental hygiene education, parents can rest easy knowing their children will continue to have healthy smiles.

- Before the first primary teeth even appear, parents can foster good dental practices by cleaning their baby's gums. As soon as the first tooth appears, parents should clean it with an infant toothbrush and make a dental appointment. As children reach kindergarten, parents can let their children start brushing and forming their own good dental care habits.
- Brushing can become less intimidating and more fun — like a game — when parents sing a silly song or give rewards for a job well done.



# Early-Dental Care

by Barry Wisdom

In the United States, parents concerned with their children's dental care have plenty of support from the American Dental Association and pharmaceutical and advertising industries. In an effort to make regular brushing "fun," cartoon characters seen on television appear on made-for-kids varieties of toothpastes.

But mother-of-two Katie Romanovich, who spent the first five of her 26 years in Odessa, Ukraine, says that same support of oral hygiene just wasn't part of the 1980s Slavic mindset.

When Romanovich, who immigrated with her family to California to escape religious persecution, told her mother of her plans to take 7-month-old son Remi to the dentist for suspected tooth decay, she was questioned by her mother.

"My mother was very surprised," says Romanovich, an attendance clerk for Twin Rivers Unified School District. "She asked me, 'Why? What's wrong with his teeth?' She considered it strange that I would take a 7-month-old to a dentist. It's a cultural thing. Where we're from, even though it's a big city, kids weren't routinely taken to a dentist until they were 5 years old."

Romanovich and her husband Sergei, a 29-year-old Georgia native who works as an independent contractor, try to impart some of their good dental care habits on their children. The couple knows the first step to creating good oral health habits for their children is maintaining their own dental hygiene.

**With the aid of The Effort's dental team, she raised the level of preventative care for Remi to ensure his best chances for a lifelong healthy smile.**

Alla Ponomar, a health program specialist working for Cover The Kids, directed the Romanovichs to a First 5 Sacramento-funded dental clinic, The Effort.

"By helping clients to get insurance for children, Cover The Kids always provides them with different resources, including dental care [referrals]," says Ponomar.

The Romanovichs' pediatric dentist couldn't definitively say why Remi's front teeth were showing signs of decay at 7 months, but possible causes included not wiping gums after feedings, early teething, genetics and such environmental contributors as the absence of fluoride in their community's tap water.

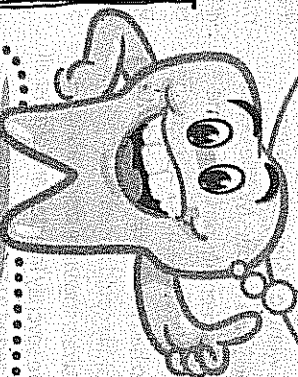
"We don't have the nutrients in our tap water that other places get," Romanovich says. A prescription for fluoride-enhanced vitamins stemmed the decay, says Romanovich, and with the aid of The Effort's dental team, she raised the level of preventative care for Remi to ensure his best chances for a lifelong healthy smile.

Today, the couple uses a soft toothbrush to brush the teeth of Remi, now 2-and-a-half years old, and an infant toothbrush for 4-month-old brother Levi.

Romanovich says even with a lifelong history of good oral care, Remi still balks at brushing. "I have to coax him," says Romanovich.

By being diligent, the couple knows that teaching proper dental care for their children is vital to their overall health, well-being and ability to learn.

**Toothy says...**  
See a dentist by your 1st Tooth or 1st Birthday!



**DID YOU KNOW...**  
YOU CAN CATCH A CAVITY THROUGH SHARING THE BACTERIA IN YOUR MOUTH?

- Follow these prevention tips:
- Don't share things that have been in your mouth — don't put the baby's pacifier in your mouth to clean it.
  - Make sure everyone in your family has their own toothbrush.
  - Wipe baby's mouth with a clean wet washcloth after every feeding.
  - Don't put a baby to bed with a bottle.

PC-3



# Smile Keepers

Dental Health on Wheels

## Keeping Sacramento's Children Smiling

by Sukhi Brar

Last year, Kate Varanelli, a dental health program coordinator for Sacramento County, went to a Sacramento-area school with the Smile Keepers Mobile Dental Van to do dental screenings on low-income preschoolers and kindergartners. She screened a little girl who had never been to the dentist because her family could not afford to go. The results of the screening were devastating — her gums were severely infected and almost all of her teeth needed to be removed.

"When I came back a year later she still hadn't had work done," says Varanelli. "Her mouth was a mess. She basically needed almost all of her teeth extracted because they were abscessed. Her teacher said she wasn't talking or eating very much."

Varanelli urged the girl's parents to get her to a dentist and educated them on ways to get financial assistance for care. When Varanelli returned to the school later in the year, she learned the girl had finally gotten care.

"Now that she had been feeling better, she was a different child. She began talking and interacting with her teacher and the other children at school," says Varanelli. "When kids have infections like that, it affects their whole health. If they are not feeling good in school, they are not learning."

Not only did the care help the girl improve at school, it may have saved her life.

"If a tooth is abscessed, that infection is really close to your sinus and brain and that infection can spread and even cause death," says Varanelli.

But Varanelli does not blame parents for not seeking the needed care because, often they really don't know what to do. She says many low-income families in the Sacramento area don't seek needed dental care for their children because they can't afford it. This lack of care can lead to serious complications for children early on in life.

**"When kids have infections like that, it affects their whole health. If they are not feeling good in school, they are not learning."**

-Kate Varanelli

The Smile Keepers Mobile Dental Van visits preschools, kindergarten classrooms and community events to provide dental screenings for low-income children.

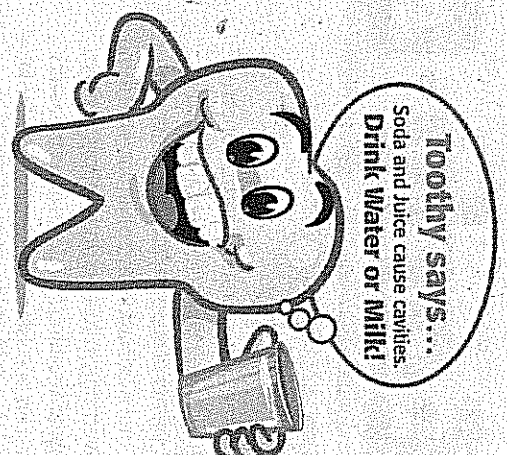
"The most important part of our program is that we are introducing children to dental care in a kid-friendly environment, educating people on why dental care is important and providing parents with the resources to get that care," Varanelli says. She adds dental screening can be life changing for a child, like the little girl whose teeth were in such severe shape.

"We have a lot of parents that just don't know [basic oral healthcare]. Parents may not

have had the care and now the kids are not getting the care," explains Varanelli.

Many parents have problems getting care and Smile Keepers works with them to help get connected to regular dental care. Every parent is given a list of resources in Sacramento including phone numbers to the clinics that provide affordable dental care.

"To me, it is exciting when I find out that someone in such need gets care," says Varanelli.



### DID YOU KNOW... CERTAIN FOODS CAN LEAD TO TOOTH DECAY?

Avoid these foods to cut down on dental problems:

- Watch out for sticky foods that are not easily removed from the teeth by saliva or water.
- Eating apples prevents cavities. Drinking apple juice causes cavities.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables. Eliminate fruit juice, soda, candy and junk food.

### How Does Tooth Decay Happen?

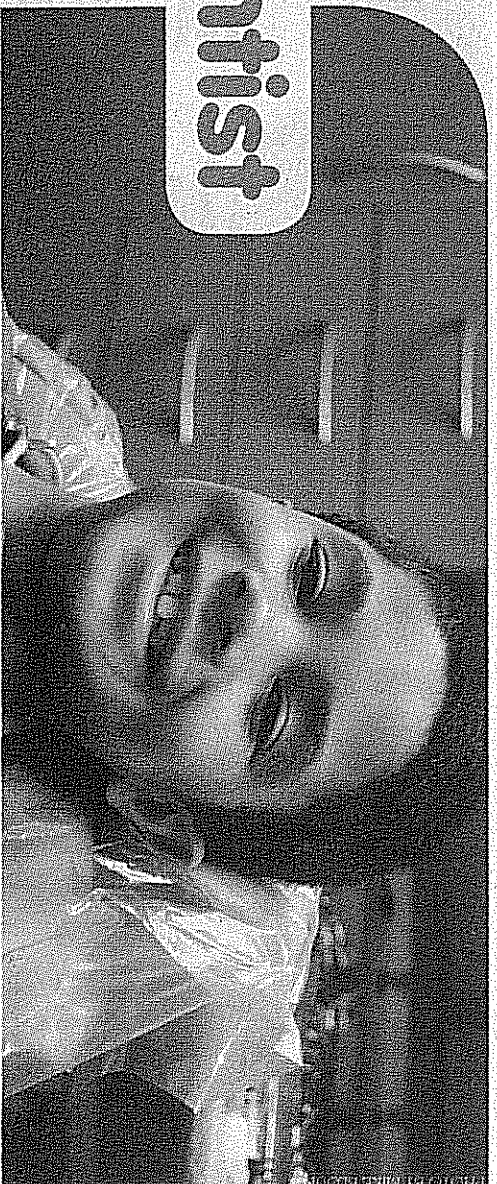
GERMS EAT SUGAR AND MAKE ACID THAT CAUSES TOOTH DECAY.



PHOTO BY SKYLER SMITH

# Choosing The Right Dentist

by Mike Blount



**D**arnell Lake, 35, is pleasantly surprised as his son Ruben is lowered in his chair at The Effort Dental Clinic in Oak Park. Ruben is smiling. There's a large stuffed monkey hanging from the overhead light, bright colors adorn the walls — and perhaps the most exciting for Ruben — a television is strategically placed on the ceiling above his head so he can watch cartoons while being examined. Lake knows his son is in the right place.

Before this visit, Lake was always cautious about taking his children Ruben, 8, Benjamin, 6, and Isabella, 3, to the dentist. He was worried his children might have a bad experience and not want to go the the dentist in the future.

"I went in to get a painful wisdom tooth removed," Lake says. "I had already been in pain for four days and I wasn't getting quality care. I just didn't want to take my kids to a place like that because they would be freaked out just walking in the door."

Through other programs he was using, Lake discovered First 5 Sacramento. Lake liked how First 5 Sacramento programs catered to children, he saw this when he took Ruben to The Effort for the first time.

The staff was mindful of certain buzz words. For example, they didn't use the word "shot" to keep his son from becoming too nervous or anxious. As a parent, Lake says this kind of attention to his child's sensitivity is exactly what he was looking for in a dental clinic. Best of all, the clinics accepted Medi-Cal dental benefits (Denti-Cal) and his children are now excited about good oral health.

**Best of all, the clinics accepted Medi-Cal dental benefits (Denti-Cal) and his children are now excited about good oral health.**

"Now, they brush and they are really good at it," Lake says. "Seeing them have a healthy smile makes me smile. When your kids are happy, you're happy."

## DID YOU KNOW...

- A top reason children miss school is because of mouth pain.
- Not only do children's teeth suffer, so does their ability to learn.
- Everyone should see a dentist every 6 months.

# Preventing Problems Down The Road

by Mike Blount

**C**avities. Braces. Impacted wisdom teeth. The list went on.

Winnie Kyalwazi, 42, knew she had to figure out a way to take care of all of them for her, her two sons, ages 15 and 11, and her two daughters, ages 14 and 12. Four years ago, the economy was on a decline and as a small business owner, making ends meet was a challenge for Kyalwazi and her family. They agonized over the decision, but eventually decided they couldn't afford insurance, including dental.

"I don't know what the perception is out there — maybe, thinking that because you have your own business, you can afford all of these services — but that's not the reality, especially for a small business and what we're going through," Kyalwazi says.

In the past, her children regularly visited the dentist and had generally good dental hygiene habits — not too many sweets or too much soda. Her two oldest children even had braces, Kyalwazi says. But insurance took care of most of the cost.

**"Without [SDDS], we would not have been able to get my daughter's wisdom teeth out and her cavities filled, which would have caused more problems down the road."**

-Winnie Kyalwazi

She had no idea how she was going to find help for her family's dental needs, but her son's high school guidance counselor told her about several low-cost care options available through programs sponsored by the Sacramento District Dental Society (SDDS) and its charitable foundation. Kyalwazi made a dental appointment to take one of her daughters who was complaining of gum pain.

"I think my daughter had something like eight cavities," Kyalwazi says. "They were able to take care of that, and we were lucky to have found a dentist to see her because she also had to have her wisdom teeth pulled."

The program also helped Kyalwazi take care of her own teeth. "My wisdom teeth were hurting me too, but we couldn't afford to get them looked at either, so I had to just fight through the pain." She would recommend anyone without insurance — especially

those with pressing needs — get help through SDDS.

"Without [SDDS], we would not have been able to get my daughter's wisdom teeth out and her cavities filled, which would have caused more problems down the road."

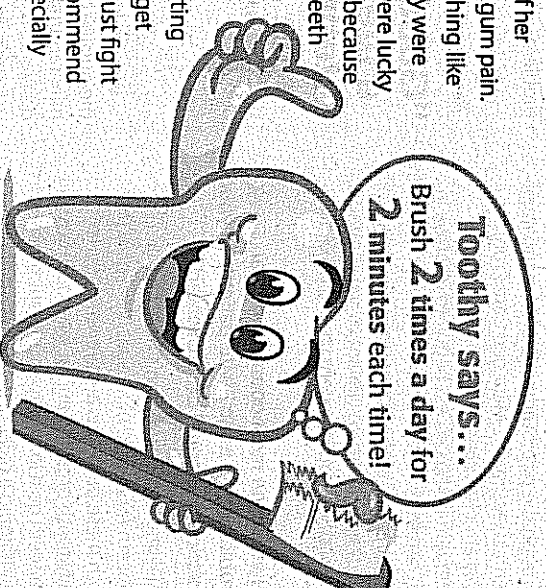


PHOTO BY MIKE BLOUNT

# Straight From The Dentist's Mouth

## A Veteran Dentist Speaks About Oral Healthcare

by Kendall Fields

*Dr. Terrence Jones has been practicing dentistry for nearly 30 years. He is actively involved in improving oral health in Sacramento County and is currently a member of the First 5 Sacramento Commission. He is the former president of the Sacramento District Dental Society and a member of the California Dental Association.*

**Where does Sacramento stand in terms of oral health?**

Many of our children have access to high quality dental care. We know that the link between access to quality care and good oral health is firmly established. For these children, oral health needs are routinely met and their oral health is good.

For others who are less fortunate, the picture is not so bright. The State of California has failed the most vulnerable children of Sacramento through the poorly administered mandatory Dental Geographic Managed Care Program.

Only after headline news and legislative intervention has access begun to improve in Sacramento. First 5 Sacramento was a leader in bringing this to the attention of our legislators and they will remain vigilant to see continued long-lasting improvements to the program.

**What are the most common dental problems you notice with patients in your practice that could be prevented?**

Dental decay and gum disease remain a concern for people of all ages. We know that both these problems are preventable. Twice daily tooth brushing and at least daily flossing the teeth go a long way to prevent problems. Maintaining a balanced diet that minimizes or

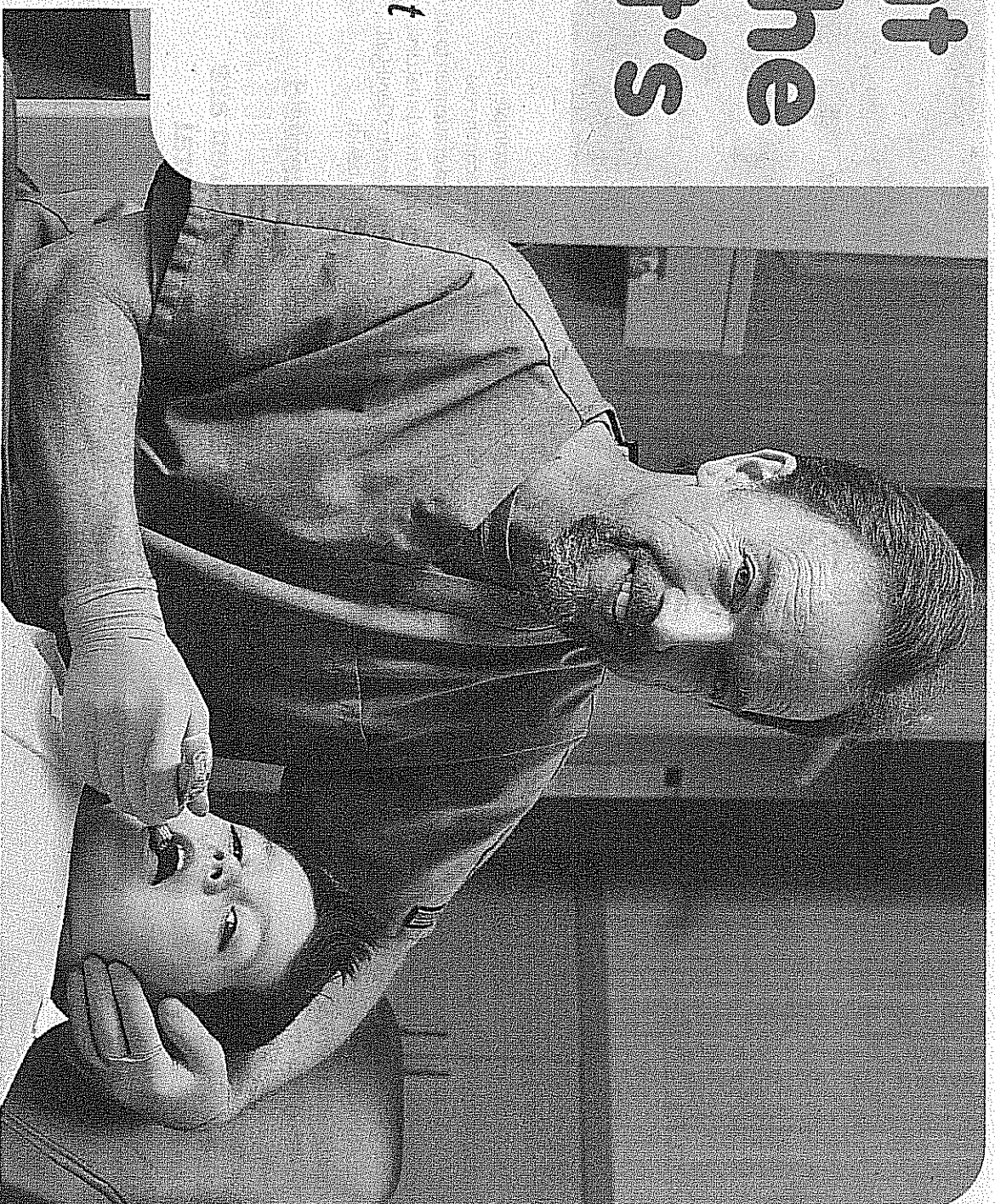


PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES

eliminates sugar and sodas is essential. Having regular dental checkups that assess your risk for cavities or periodontal disease provides valuable feedback on how well you've been doing and how you might improve.

**What are the first signs of dental problems?**

We know that dental decay or caries is a bacterial disease that can be spread by saliva to others. So often, when we examine an infant or a toddler, we start by asking a lot of questions about the dental health of the mom and dad. If they have untreated tooth decay, that can be the first warning that the child might have a problem.

**“Good habits can last a lifetime ... and a lifetime is how long your teeth should last.”**

-Dr. Terrence Jones

We also know that caries start when the outside of the tooth loses some of the minerals that keep it hard and strong. This demineralization is caused by the bacteria that use sugar to form an acid. This acid can make

the affected part of the tooth look chalky white. As the tooth loses more and more of the surface minerals, the chalky white area can start to soften, discolor and get larger. If left untreated, a hole in the tooth will eventually develop and the cavity will need to be cleaned and the tooth restored.

**Why should parents have a dentist perform a dental checkup on their children?**

The goal of the dental checkup, the reason for the caries risk assessment, is to prevent this process from going so far that surgical intervention or drilling is needed. The dentist lists all the protective factors that are working in the child's favor and all the risk factors that are working against the child to determine a current level of risk for developing cavities. Once the risk level of the child is determined, an individual treatment plan can be developed. This plan would include individual home care recommendations, self-management goals, and anticipatory guidance and treatment schedules.

**What do parents need to do in order to promote good dental health habits among their children?**

Parents can promote good dental habits in their children by taking care of their own teeth. Not only are you your child's first and most important role model, but if you have tooth decay, your saliva can transmit the bad bacteria that cause tooth decay to your child.

**Many parents think that they don't need to take as good of care of their children's teeth because they will fall out. Is this true?**

No, it is a common misperception that, since a child's baby teeth are not permanent, dental care can wait. But a child's teeth, like an adult's teeth, are necessary for eating, speaking, jaw development, social interactions and self-esteem. Problems with children's teeth can cause pain and suffering, infections, fevers and even death.

**When should a parent start taking care of their child's teeth? Why is it important to instill good dental hygiene habits at an early age?**

It is very important that good oral care begins before the baby is born, while mom is pregnant. She must practice good oral hygiene, watch what she eats and get regular dental checkups. When the baby is born, breastfeed the baby. Wipe the baby's mouth with a clean washcloth after feeding. If the baby uses a bottle, don't put the baby to bed with the bottle, since the sugar in milk, formula or juice will encourage the growth of bacteria that lead to cavities.

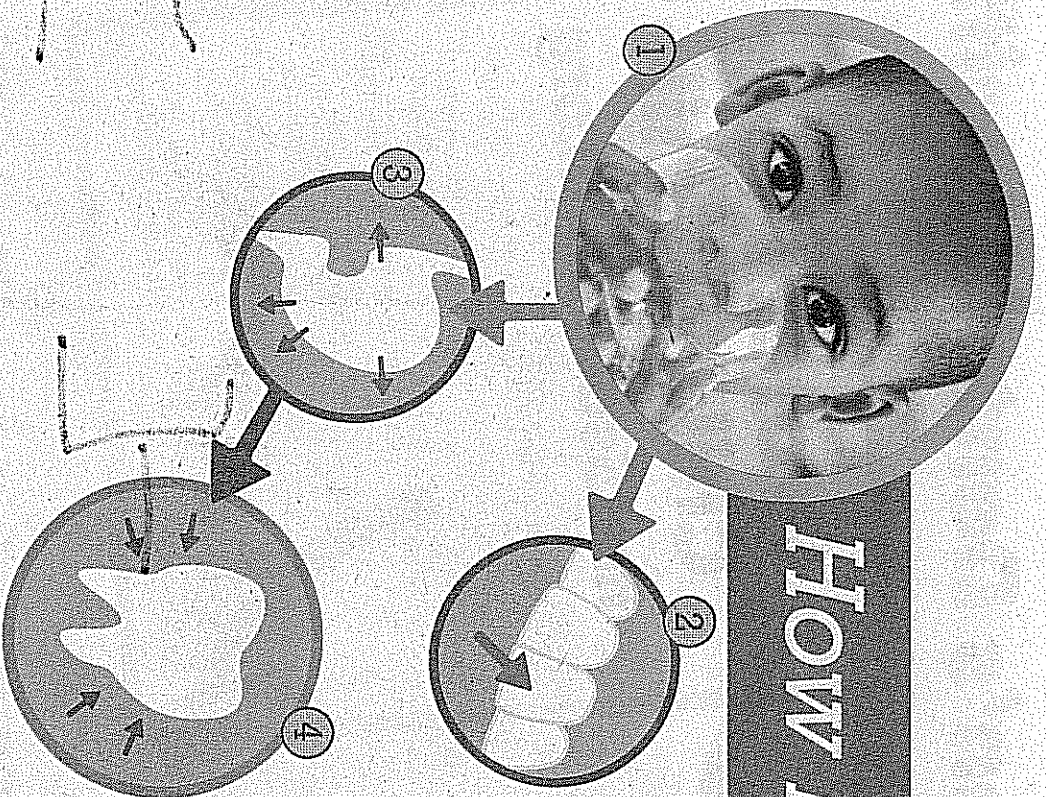
**Good habits can last a lifetime ... and a lifetime is how long your teeth should last.**

[first5sacramento.net](http://first5sacramento.net)

First 5 Sacramento Commission

A Special Advertising Supplement to Sacramento News & Review

# How Does Fluoride Work?



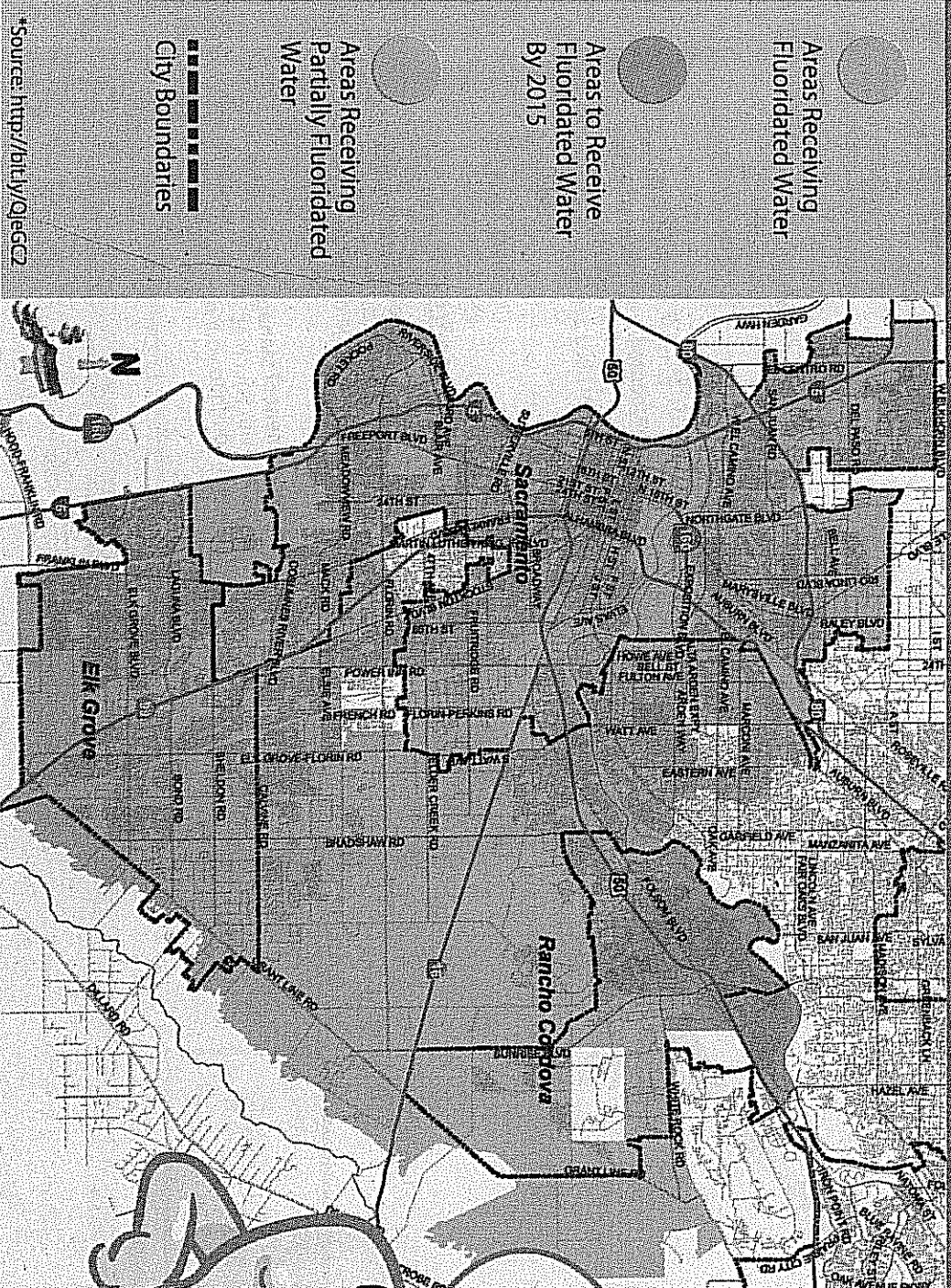
**1** Drinking fluoridated water helps strengthen our teeth and bones.

**2** Fluoride mixes with our saliva to reach the surface of our teeth, where acid from bacteria in the mouth can cause damage. Fluoride helps that damage and protects the teeth from more decay.

**3** Fluoride enters the teeth and bones after it is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach.

**4** Fluoride, phosphate and calcium combine to create a strong barrier to protect our teeth from cavities. Fluoride strengthens teeth so they can withstand the acid produced by bacteria found in the mouth.

## WATER FLUORIDATION IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY\*

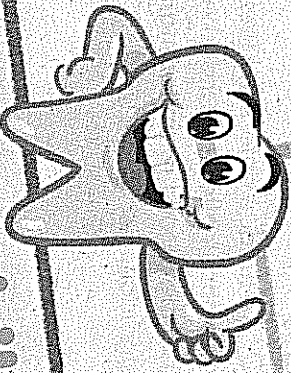


\*Source: <http://bitly/QieGZ>



# The A to Z's Of Children's Dental Health

## START HERE!



### Find A Child-Friendly Dentist Near You!

**The Effort Oak Park Clinic\***  
3415 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
(916) 737-5555

**The Effort North Highlands Clinic\***  
6015 Watt Avenue, Ste. 2  
(916) 737-5555

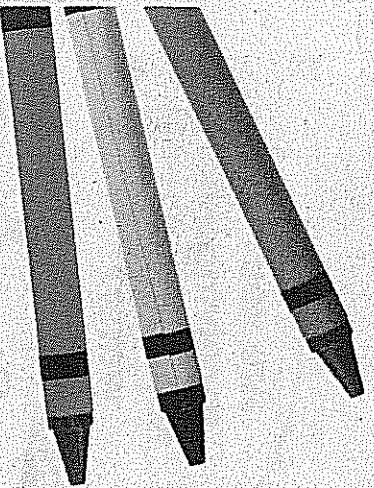
**The Sacramento Native  
American Health Clinic**  
2020 J Street  
(916) 341-0575

**The Effort South Valley Clinic\***  
8233 E. Stockton Blvd., Ste. D  
(916) 737-5555

**The Effort Rancho Cordova Clinic\***  
Coming Soon!

Clinics funded by First 5 Sacramento

\*Accepts Medi-Cal dental benefits  
(Denti-Cal).



### Protect Your Child's Smile first5sacdentel.org

Dental care tips and resources are only a click away!

- Videos featuring local dental programs
- Resources for parents and dentists
- Information on how to find dental insurance
- Dental care information flyers to view or download
- Street-level fluoridation map to view or download

### Still need help...

#### with insurance?

**Cover The Kids**  
If you need low-cost, comprehensive health insurance for your children, visit or call: [coverthekids.com](http://coverthekids.com)  
(866) 850-4321

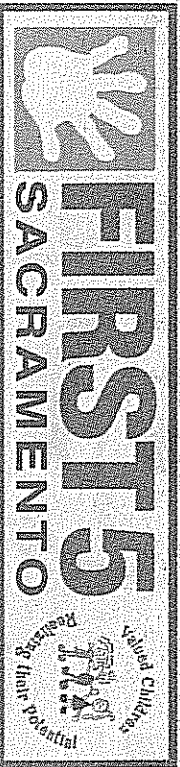
#### finding a family dentist?

**Sacramento District Dental Society**  
If you can't find a dentist near you or you need a referral, visit or call: [sdds.org](http://sdds.org)  
915 28th St.  
(916) 446-1211

#### using your Medi-Cal dental benefits (Denti-Cal)?

**Health Care Options**  
If you don't know what Medi-Cal dental plan you have or would like to change dental plans, call: (800) 430-4263

**The Department of Managed Health Care**  
If you are having trouble with your Medi-Cal dental plan or getting through to your dental plan, call: (888) 466-2219



The First 5 Sacramento Commission uses Proposition 10 (tobacco tax) to fund the healthy development of children ages 0 through 5 and their families. For more information, visit [first5sacramento.net](http://first5sacramento.net) or call (916) 876-5865.