A healthy mouth is good for your body

It's time to 'say ahh' and celebrate World Oral Health Day (20 March).

This year the day encourages people to make the connection between their overall health and wellbeing and their oral health.

Dr Elaine Mawdsley, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s (SCHHS) Director of Oral Health, said: “A healthy mouth and a healthy body go hand in hand, the condition of our teeth and gums can often indicate other health issues. Also there are common risk factors with other serious diseases.”

“In adults periodontitis, or severe gum infection, has been linked to a higher incidence in heart disease, diabetes and stroke,” she said.

“As with all health matters, prevention is better than cure. Starting oral health care early, before there is a problem, is critical to protecting young teeth and avoiding preventable hospital stays.”

More than 50% of Australian children suffer from decay; more serious impacts from decay in ‘baby teeth’ may be development of a child’s eating ability and speech patterns. More than 26,000 children under the age of 15 are admitted to hospital each year to treat tooth decay.

“Each year our dental vans and clinics care for more than 15,000 Sunshine Coast children. The team don’t just check for decay, they examine the health of the soft tissue including gums, roof of the mouth, back of the throat and around the tonsils. If an underlying health condition is suspected the dental practitioner will refer the child to the appropriate health professional such as a General Practitioner” Dr Mawdsley said.

“Where possible, children of school age are offered an appointment by the oral health service at least once a year. These regular examinations are key to ensuring children maintain good oral health.”

Parents of school children from prep through to year 10 can also call to book an appointment at one of 25 facilities across the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service by visiting www.health.qld.gov.au/sunshinecoast and searching for oral health to locate their nearest dental clinic.

ENDS

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