



## Dear patients and parents,

Toothbeary has been extremely busy over the past few months. We are in the process of completing our renovation, perfectly timed to coincide with Toothbeary 10th Birthday next year. In addition, we have incorporated the business to Care4Milkteeth LTD, but rest assured we are still trading as Toothbeary and our concept and ethos remains unchanged.

Will and I were invited to medical conferences in South Africa and London where we presented our respective work regarding the sedation techniques at Toothbeary and Sky News and ITV recently visited the practice to report about our efforts to improve children's dental health in the UK. Our fourth newsletter focuses on the benefits of Xylitol (a sweetener), the importance of healthy saliva and the effects of dental accidents and hypomineralisation on teeth. We hope you find this update interesting and useful and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes, Nicole



they ingest it and thereby reduce the uptake of glucose. Their energy producing pathway is essentially blocked and they literally starve to death.

Xylitol also has other dental benefits:

- It increases the absorption of calcium in the digestive system, which is good for the teeth and may also protect against osteoporosis.
- It increases the production of saliva. Saliva contains calcium and phosphate, which aids in the remineralization of teeth.
- It reduces the acidity of saliva, which helps to fight the degradation of tooth enamel.

Toothbeary recommends chewing Xylitol gum or sucking a Xylitol mint after each snack and, whenever possible, to use Xylitol as a sweetener in food.

Nicole



## Xylitol the sweet miracle

Xylitol is a white, naturally occurring crystalline sweetener that looks and tastes like sugar. It is low in calories, obtained from a variety of plants and has been used in foods since the 1960's.

It is also added to medications and oral health products, such as toothpaste and chewing gum. Studies have demonstrated that Xylitol can reduce the development of tooth decay by up to 60%, arrest and in some cases even reverse existing dental caries.

One of the leading risk factors for tooth decay is an oral bacterium called *Streptococcus mutans*. These oral bacteria feed on glucose from food, but they cannot metabolise Xylitol. Replacing sugar with Xylitol therefore reduces the available energy for the harmful bacteria. But the effects of Xylitol go beyond that, although *Streptococcus mutans* cannot utilise Xylitol,

## My child has had an accident – what next?

Trauma in baby teeth are very common, in particular when the child starts to explore his or her environment. Following mouth injury, the child should be seen by a dentist who will conduct a complete examination and, depending on the injury, an x-ray might be needed. The management of baby teeth injuries varies but often focuses on preventing damage to the adult teeth.

A baby tooth that is loose may heal without treatment but if it interferes with the bite it may be necessary to removed it. If a baby tooth has been knocked out completely, it should not be placed back into the gums because of the risk of damaging the permanent tooth bud. Losing a front primary tooth early does not typically affect the child's speech or the position of the permanent tooth, however if there is an



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aesthetic concern, Toothbeary does offer replacement teeth specifically for baby teeth. If the tooth is broken, the treatment may include smoothing the rough edges of the tooth or repairing it with a tooth-colored material; other treatments will depend on the extent of the fracture.

Good healing after an injury depends, in part, on good oral hygiene. Brushing with a soft toothbrush after every meal is beneficial along with a soft diet and a reduced use of the dummy. It is important to monitor the tooth as discoloration, pain or swelling of the gums may appear over time.

Anmy



The cause of the MIH is not fully understood yet, but has been linked to certain complications during pregnancy or infectious, respiratory diseases or antibiotic administration to children below the age of 3.

Toothbeary recommends that children with MIH should see us for check-ups, hygiene appointments and fluoride applications every three months to ensure the best prognosis for the future of the teeth. At home, it is important to brush twice daily with the correct age appropriate fluoridated toothpaste and Tooth Mousse should be applied weekly.

Esther



## The occurrence of hypomineralisation

Over the past years we have seen an increase in the occurrence of white, yellow or brown spots on newly erupted first adult molars and front teeth. This condition is called Molar-Incisor-Hypomineralisation or short MIH. Hypomineralised teeth have a weaker enamel structure and the risk of developing dental decay is increased. As the name suggests, the first adult molars and the adult incisors are mostly effected, however hypomineralisation can also occur on other teeth.

Children with MIH often encounter an increased sensitivity, especially when drinking cold liquid or brushing with cold water. This can have a great impact on their daily life. They might brush their teeth less effectively and be more anxious when visiting the dentist.

White and yellow spots are typical hallmarks of a mild condition. The sensitivity issue can often be improved by means of fissure sealants and by applying a calcium paste (Tooth Mousse).

In more severe cases the spots are brownish. The enamel is significantly weaker and often breaks down. These areas decay easily and therefore it is very important to cover these teeth with restorations such as fillings or preformed crowns. In some cases it is even necessary to perform a root canal treatment and sometimes the teeth need to be extracted.

## The magic of saliva

Most of us associate tooth brushing and flossing with clean healthy teeth, but rarely do we consider saliva as an integral part of oral health. Saliva is a natural cleansing solution, made up of 99% water; it washes away bacteria and food debris between the teeth. The saliva also contains enzymes to help with digestion and antibodies to fight off infection.

If children do not produce sufficient amounts of saliva, the inside of their mouths and tongues can get sore and dry. They might struggle with food and a reduced saliva flow can cause bad breath. Furthermore, the risk of developing dental decay increases, as the saliva neutralises acids created by sugar metabolizing bacteria.

How do we ensure that a child produces sufficient saliva? The most effective thing to do is to encourage your child to drink more water. A dehydrated body produces less saliva.

- Send your child to school with a water bottle, and ask them to sip it throughout the day.
- Your child should drink a glass of water as soon as they wake up and with every meal.
- Chew Xylitol gum to promote saliva flow.

The recommended daily amount of water is:

- 5 glasses (1 litre) for 5 to 8 year old children
- 7 glasses (1.5 litres) for 9 to 12 year old children
- 8 to 10 glasses (2 litres) for teenagers

It is important to keep our teeth healthy by supporting the natural systems designed to protect them. We recommend a saliva test following treatment to assess saliva production (quantity and quality) and to allow us to provide personalised advice regarding its potential role in decay. Routine saliva testing is available at Toothbeary and can be added to your next hygiene appointment.

Athene

## A big warm welcome to our new dentists:

Dr Michelle Rip joined us in March to support our clinical team on Thursdays.

Michelle holds an MSc in Paediatric Dentistry from the Eastman Dental Hospital and is a very experienced children's dentist. Michelle offers dental treatment of the highest standard to all children, including those with special needs and anxiety.

Dr Sarah Gregor previously worked at the paediatric dental department of the University of Munster in Germany and is in the process of finishing her postgraduate degree in paediatric dentistry. She just recently moved over from Germany and is excited to support our clinical team on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

## Toothbeary Club

Our Toothbeary Club has been designed to reward our patients who visit the practice regularly! Every six months, our members are entitled to:

- Dental examination
- Oral hygiene appointment
- Tooth brushing school
- A one-off saliva test
- 10% discount on additional examinations and hygiene visits
- 10% discount on fissure sealants
- Worldwide dental trauma insurance
- Worldwide emergency call out insurance

Membership starts at £ 18.25/month, please ask the reception for more information!