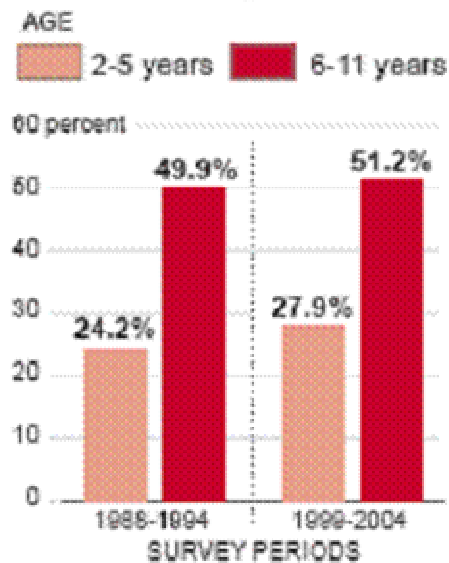


Too much sugar in young children's diets, government study suggests

Rotting baby teeth

A new study reports the prevalence of cavities in the baby teeth of children ages 2 to 5 years old has significantly increased.

Percentage of tooth decay in children's baby teeth



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention AP

Special Report of April 30, 2007, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, Trends in Oral Health Status -- United States, 1988-1994 and 1999-2004; Mary Hayes, DDS, pediatric dentistry, and spokeswoman for the American Dental Association, Chicago

Weaver, Jane (April 30, 2007). *Cavities increasing in baby teeth: too much sugar in young children's diets, government study suggest.* MSNBC. Retrieved on May 1, 2007 from MSNBC website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18395089/>

MSNBC Special Report- Tooth decay in young children's baby teeth is on the rise, a worrying trend that signals the preschool crowd is eating too much sugar, according to the largest government study of the nation's dental health in more than 25 years.

Experts are concerned about the prevalence of cavities in baby teeth of children ages 2 to 5. It increased to 28 percent in 1999-2004, from 24 percent in 1988-1994, according to the report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For the last 40 years there had been a decrease in the amount of tooth decay in young children, based on federal health statistics. Other studies have suggested the decline might have ended, but the new report contains the first statistically significant proof the trend has reversed, dental experts said.

The concern is that very young children will be exposed to dental decay at a greater level throughout their lives.

When you have more decay in your baby teeth, there's a greater likelihood you'll have decay in your adult teeth," the study's lead author, Dr. Bruce Dye of the National Center for Health Statistics told MSNBC.com. "The ability to take care of teeth requires healthy behavior. Unfortunately, we're not reinforcing healthy lifestyles for our preschoolers."

Link to obesity epidemic

One reason for the rise in baby tooth decay is that parents are giving their children more processed snack foods than in the past, and more bottled water or other drinks instead of fluoridated tap water, Dye said.

"They're relying more on fruit snacks, juice boxes, candy and soda for the sustenance of preschoolers, he said.

Other experts agree diet is at least part of the explanation for the rising cavity rates.

"The same things contributing to the obesity epidemic can also contribute to tooth decay," said Dr. Gary Rozier, a dentist who teaches public health policy at the University of North Carolina.

For more information please visit MSNBC at:
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18395089/from/ET/>

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