



Oral prevention starts with the mother

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Even if caries in pre-school children has been known since the beginning of the 20th century and, despite the progress in cures, early childhood caries (ECC) is still a public health problem, affecting both underdeveloped and industrialised nations. ECC is considered as one of the most prevalent diseases in childhood globally. When compared with other infancy diseases, it is fivefold more common than asthma and sevenfold more common than hay fever.

Sugar has a pivotal role in caries development, mostly during the first years of life (Paglia et al., 2019). This, together with poor oral hygiene, increases the chance of caries onset tremendously. Thus, it is clear that preventive measures are focused on oral health-related behaviours and dietary habits.

Based on these premises, paediatric dentists should focus on the mother's education in order to avoid the development of caries.

The paediatric dentist has the duty to be the mothers' dentist, before of the child's. Mothers should be educated on their diet and oral hygiene and on the correct nutrition of the child, starting from the first month of age, limiting the child's intake of sugars and avoiding free sugars up to 2 years of age; dentists should inform the parents on when they have to start cleaning teeth and when fluoride is needed.

Caries preventive measures should be established as early as possible.

For a pediatric dentist, the only real success is not treating ECC with the latest technology, but visiting ECC-free children.

Reference

Paglia L, Friuli S, Colombo S, Paglia M. The effect of added sugars on children's health outcomes: Obesity, Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome (OSAS), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Chronic Diseases. *Eur J Paediatr Dent* 2019; 20(2):127-132.