Some things have changed for the better among Wisconsin’s third-graders. Caries experience and dental sealants have improved since the baseline Healthy Smiles/Healthy Growth Survey in the 2001-02 school year. However, barriers to better dental health still remain, especially for low-income and minority children. Working together, public and private health care providers can improve access to comprehensive dental care to all children.

**TOOTH DECAY**

#1

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood.

1 IN 2 CHILDREN HAVE HAD TOOTH DECAY

UNTREATED TOOTH DECAY

1 in 5 children have untreated tooth decay.

IMPACT OF TOOTH DECAY

Tooth decay can impact a child’s life in the following ways:

- learning
- self-esteem
- speaking
- sleeping
- eating

DECAY BY RACE/ETHNICITY

African American children are nearly twice as likely to have untreated decay compared to White children.

- White 15%
- African American 27%
- Hispanic/Latino 20%
- Asian 24%
- Other* 29%

*D Other includes: American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, multi-racial and unknown
About 60% of Wisconsin children have dental sealants.

Dental sealants prevent tooth decay on the chewing surfaces of teeth.

**Sealants**

**Prevalence**

About 60% of Wisconsin children have dental sealants.

**Sealant Costs**

The cost of one dental sealant is roughly one-third the cost of a filling.

**Conclusions**

Children from all races and ethnicities exceed the Healthy People 2020 target of 28% for dental sealants.

*Other includes: American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, multi-racial and unknown

**Improvements**

Currently children are experiencing less tooth decay and are more likely to have dental sealants compared to the 2001-02 school year.

For more information about the Wisconsin Healthy Smiles Survey visit:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00589.pdf