Some things have changed for the better among Wisconsin’s third-graders. Since the last Healthy Smiles Healthy Growth Survey, the use of dental sealants has grown. But barriers to better dental health still remain, especially for low-income and minority children. Caries experience levels have increased from the last survey and demonstrate that dental decay is still a problem for Wisconsin 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.

**3 OUT OF 5 CHILDREN HAVE HAD TOOTH DECAY**

3 in 5 children have untreated tooth decay.

**DENTAL PAIN**

In addition, approximately 3,000 third-grade children statewide are suffering with dental pain or an infection and need urgent dental treatment.

**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 16%
- African American 27%
- Hispanic/Latino 22%
- Asian 19%
- Other* 25%

*Other includes: American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, multi-racial and unknown
About 70% of Wisconsin children have dental sealants.

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

**CONCLUSIONS**

**HEALTHY PEOPLE 2020**

- White: 73%
- African American: 56%
- Hispanic/Latino: 68%
- Asian: 69%
- Other*: 68%

28% GOAL

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 NEEDED**

Currently children are experiencing more tooth decay compared to previous school years.

**PREVALENCE**

About 70% of Wisconsin children have dental sealants.

**SEALANT COSTS**

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

For more information about the Wisconsin Healthy Smiles Survey visit:

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