

Cavities in Baby Teeth May Come From Poor Food Choices

Dental office a good place to offer education on kids' nutrition, researcher says

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TUESDAY, June 22 (HealthDay News) -- Obesity and increased consumption of sugary drinks appear to be linked to rising rates of cavities in very young children, a U.S. study has found.

Researchers looked at 65 children, aged 2 to 5, who received treatment for cavities in [baby](#) teeth and found that nearly 28 percent of those kids had a body-mass index that indicated they were overweight or [obese](#).

That rate is 5 percent higher than the estimated national average for childhood overweight or obesity, the study authors explained in a news release from the University at Buffalo, in New York.

The researchers also found that about 71 percent of the children had a daily caloric intake higher than the normal 1,200 calories for their age group.

The preliminary findings were to be presented Tuesday at the Endocrine Society's annual meeting in San Diego.

"We hypothesized that poor [nutritional](#) choices may link obesity and dental decay in young children, but there is very little published data associating these two health issues," first study author Dr. Kathleen Bethin, an associate professor of pediatrics at the University at Buffalo and director of the pediatric endocrinology and diabetes fellowship program at Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, said in the news release.

"The main point of our findings is that poor nutrition may link obesity to tooth decay. Thus the dental office . . . may be an ideal place to educate families about nutrition and the risks of obesity and [dental](#) decay," Bethin stated.

She added that there was "no difference in total calories consumed by the overweight and healthy weight kids, so the problem isn't overeating, per se, just making the wrong food choices."

An estimated 5 percent to 10 percent of youngsters in the United States have early childhood cavities and childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past three decades, affecting nearly one in five kids by 2008, according to Healthy People 2010.

More information

The U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion has more about [taking care of your child's teeth](#).

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