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ASTDD launches National Oral Health Data Portal

In January 2022, the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) launched the ASTDD National Oral Health Data Portal. This is the first comprehensive oral health data portal in the nation, consolidating information from federal, state, and other datasets into one publicly accessible website.

The data portal consists of three main components: the Dataset Explorer, which features filterable oral health datasets; the National Oral Health Surveillance System Dashboard, which consolidates national indicators and allows viewers to compare state performance on a variety of measures; and the Public Github Repository, which hosts raw data files, detailed descriptions of datasets, and ASTDD's methodology for incorporating data.

Leslie Wise, an epidemiologist with the Illinois Department of Public Health's Oral Health Section (OHS), emphasized that the ASTDD National Oral Health Data Portal will enhance OHS' efforts to build a comprehensive oral health surveillance system. The Illinois Oral Health Surveillance System will measure the goals and indicators laid out in the Illinois Oral Health Plan IV.

"It gives us an excellent view of where Illinois is and how we can improve," she said. "It's a one-stop shop to get an overview of oral health in Illinois."

Dr. Wise expects that the data portal will assist OHS in staying abreast of relevant data and disseminating it to the public. She also hopes that the data portal will encourage stakeholders to get involved in the effort to improve oral health indicators in Illinois.

"This may be of interest to people and motivate them to join the work to improve oral health," she said.

The ASTDD National Oral Health Data Portal can be accessed at <https://www.nationaloralhealthdataportal.net>. Individual datasets can be viewed [here](#) and Illinois-specific data can be viewed [here](#).



Infant Welfare Society provides virtual oral health and nutrition curriculum for school-aged children



During the pandemic, oral health outreach to school-aged children became far more challenging. At Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society (IWS), this challenge turned into a creative opportunity to reach more children and families. With many of her usual projects on pause, Audrey Greffin, IWS' Grants and Outreach Director, decided to build a virtual oral health and nutrition curriculum for children.

"I was thinking about the students and the communities and how I needed to get health education out there, because I didn't know if they were getting that anymore. Lots of schools and children weren't," Greffin said. "That was really my priority."

Greffin's oral health and nutrition curriculum consists of five topics: brushing, flossing, food groups, sugar, and sweet drinks. She hopes to add dental caries as the sixth topic. Each topic comes with a bundle of materials appropriate for pre-K through eighth grade students. These include handouts, videos, and quizzes. Some materials are also available in Spanish.

"Our health education bundles give kids of varying ages a good sense of how to take care of their teeth and their

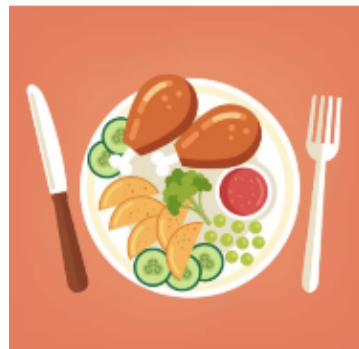
bodies," said Greffin.

Before the pandemic, IWS reached 15 schools with their in-person health education program. Since implementing the virtual curriculum, they've been able to expand to 67 schools. Greffin credits the program's flexibility, which has made it a popular choice for schools.

"I wanted to make it as flexible for the schools as possible, because I knew they were taking on so much," Greffin said. "Schools can either offer our material to teachers and they can put it in their school's curriculum, or schools can simply forward the program's material to families directly, and they'll have access to it."

Greffin also noted that the virtual curriculum can be used in dental offices that want to send patients home with oral

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Week 3: Food Groups

What we eat directly impacts our health. The eating habits we develop as kids predict our eating habits as adults. For this reason, it is imperative that we help instill good eating habits early. Kids should have one portion from each of the five food groups on their plate for every meal: One fruit, veggie, grain, protein, and dairy.

Food Group Bundle



Week 4: Sugar

Sugar is not only harmful to our health, but it's also incredibly addictive. Most of us know that sweets aren't good for us, but sugar is in more than just cookies and candy - hidden sugars are everywhere! A diet high in sugar can lead to a higher risk of chronic disease, like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. Sugar also lends to poor oral health.

Sugar Bundle



Photos from top to bottom: IWS Grants and Outreach Director Audrey Greffin providing oral health education to families; an excerpt of the IWS oral health and nutrition curriculum.

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health materials. The IWS Children's Clinic hopes to use the curriculum in this way to help dental patients learn better self-care strategies between visits.

"Whenever we have a patient, we're always giving them a handout," Greffin said.

While the virtual curriculum has been an important tool during the pandemic, Greffin also hopes that IWS can fully resume in-person services soon. IWS's portable dentistry program usually serves 2,000 students each year but has been paused since 2020. Greffin worries that many students are not getting dental care in their absence.

"That's another reason why I push oral health education so much," she said. "This could be the only resource students have to preventative oral health care."

Despite the pandemic's many challenges, Greffin encourages other providers to find creative solutions to reach their patients.

"Do something different and see if it works," she said. "It's really just about throwing something at the wall and seeing if it sticks."

For more information or to request a copy of the virtual curriculum, Greffin can be reached at agreffin@childrenscliniciws.org.

This project is part of Oral Health Section's Oral Health Promotion Program and is funded by the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant.

IOHP IV Objective 1.C sets the goal to address common risk factors for disease (e.g. nutrition, tobacco use) by sharing messaging with the diverse population of Illinois that good oral health is essential to good overall health. IWS' efforts to educate children, families, and educators about oral health works towards achieving this goal.



Oral Health Section provides private well fluoride testing

Optimal water fluoridation is a key factor in maintaining good oral health in the community. IDPH's Oral Health Section (OHS) works closely with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to monitor community water safety and to keep fluoride levels optimal. Although many individuals receive fluoridated water through community water systems, OHS also provides fluoride testing for individuals whose water source is through their private well.



Private wells are tested for fluoride content to assist pediatricians, pedodontists, and local health departments to determine if a child residing and drinking from the well may benefit from supplemental fluoride. Fluoride supplements must be prescribed by a physician or dentist and should not be prescribed without knowledge of fluoride levels present.

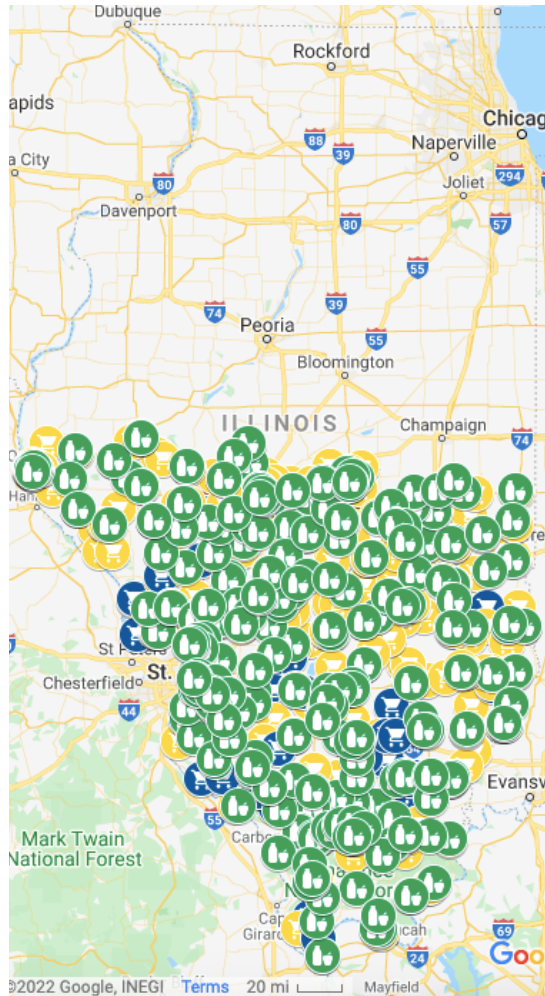
The reduction of dental cavities (tooth decay) due to optimal levels of fluoride either in water or through fluoride supplements is most beneficial to children 3 to 12 years of age.

OHS and the IDPH Division of Laboratories will test the fluoride level in water upon the recommendation of IDPH, a local health department, or a medical or dental provider for:

- Private wells (serving homes where children 3 to 12 years of age reside)
- Mobile home parks (serving homes where children 3 to 12 years of age reside)

To test the fluoride content of well water that falls into one of the above categories, contact DPH.OralHealth@illinois.gov to request a fluoride test kit.

Oral Health Section creates food resource map for Illinois



Good nutrition is a vital component of oral wellness. A diet low in sugar and high in fresh foods is correlated with improved oral and overall health. However, many Illinoisans struggle with food insecurity or lack of access to fresh foods.

IDPH's Oral Health Section (OHS) has begun creating a food resource map for Illinois. This map includes grocery stores, food pantries, and soup kitchens where Illinoisans can access fresh foods. It also indicates which stores accept SNAP/EBT.

Food resource and dental resource maps were requested during stakeholder meetings for the Illinois Oral Health Plan IV. Both maps are in progress and are expected to be complete by the end of 2022. The dental resource map link will be published in a later newsletter.

The OHS food resource map can be accessed at:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1-iPIVM33p-37syHp3_VQgh-gsXIF2xA&usp=sharing.

Currently, the map covers the southern half of Illinois. OHS will continue to expand and update it. If information on the map is missing or inaccurate, contact OHS at DPH.OralHealth@Illinois.gov.

IOHP IV

Objective 1.E.3

sets the goal to improve the public's knowledge and action to choose healthy foods, beverages, and to engage in physical activity to achieve and to maintain a healthy weight. The OHS food resource map works towards achieving this goal.



Division of Oral Health renamed Oral Health Section

The Division of Oral Health has been renamed the Oral Health Section. This section is now a part of the Division of Community Health & Prevention at the Illinois Department of Public Health. The vision, mission, and duties of the section remain the same.

Help the Oral Health Section newsletter improve!

Please take this five-minute feedback survey:

<https://redcap.link/OralHealthSectionNewsletterFeedback>

