

BSPD WELCOMES SUPERVISED TOOTHBRUSHING PLAN

The Labour Party announcement in October proposing a supervised toothbrushing scheme to target three, four and five-year-olds in the 20% most deprived areas in England was warmly received by the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD).

Based on the CORE20 part of the CORE20PLUS5¹ initiative, the costed and funded proposal would see children attending schools and nurseries in areas of socioeconomic deprivation receiving supervised toothbrushing and a supply of toothbrushes and toothpaste to take home.

BSPD has been calling for supervised toothbrushing in England for children for over ten years. There is evidence from Scotland² that reaching children as early as possible with supervised toothbrushing schemes gives them a better oral health start to life and is more cost effective in the long term for the NHS. Additional investment has also been announced, increasing the number of children who should be able to see an NHS dentist.

Professor Claire Stevens CBE said: ‘This is a serious plan to grip both the immediate crisis and set NHS dentistry on the path to recovery in the long-term. BSPD believes that every child should have a “dental home” – an ongoing and preventively focused relationship with an NHS dentist. However, with children’s dental services in crisis we urgently need to put a blanket of support around the most vulnerable children in our society. We must recognise that some children need greater help to get the oral health start in life that every child deserves. We welcome these measures as we know we need urgent action to address the persistent and immoral inequalities we see in children’s oral health.’

References

1. NHS England. Core20PLUS5 – An approach to reducing health inequalities for children and young people. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/core20plus5-cyp/> (accessed October 2023).
2. Gray-Burrows K A, Day P F, El-Yousfi S, Lloyd E, Hudson K, Marshman Z. A national survey of supervised toothbrushing programmes in England. *Br Dent J* 2023; doi: 10.1038/s41415-023-6182-1.

ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP TOOLKIT UPDATED TO SUPPORT WORLD AMR AWARENESS WEEK

Over the coming week, 18–24 November 2023, many national dental organisations including the British Dental Association (BDA) will come together to support the World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Awareness Week and its theme ‘Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together’.

Understanding AMR and the drivers for its development will help healthcare professionals work together to reduce its emergence and spread. It is well documented that the more we use antimicrobial agents, the more drug resistance will develop.

If no action is taken, AMR infections are predicted to lead to 10 million deaths annually by 2050: a number higher than the total deaths caused by COVID-19 during the pandemic period.

Therefore, dental professionals have worked together to update the online dental antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) toolkit with resources for dental teams, students and patients as well as wider healthcare professionals.¹ The range of educational resources include a new website for students and educators providing links to various online training courses.²

The dental profession already focuses on the prevention of oral diseases to reduce the incidence of severe infections that necessitate the use of antimicrobial agents. Adhering to the best practice recommendations aimed at preventing infections, in addition to stewarding the use of antimicrobial agents, are very important. Accordingly, ‘Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention’³ is included in the updated AMS toolkit.¹ It is also acknowledged that a system-level change is required to facilitate the provision of best practice. Furthermore, the healthcare professionals need to look to the future and ensure appropriate disposal of antimicrobials to reduce environmental contamination. Guidance on the appropriate disposal of waste in healthcare settings including dentistry is available in HTM 07-01⁴ and SHTN 3.⁵

BDJ readers are encouraged to make the most out of the above-mentioned resources to ensure that they and their dental teams are working together to help keep patients safe by tackling the problem of AMR.



Note: Dental Antimicrobial Stewardship in Scotland is available via <https://www.sapg.scot/guidance-qi-tools/dental-stewardship/>. SAPG Dental statement recommending phenoxymethylpenicillin as first line when antibiotics are required for acute dento-alveolar infections is available via <https://www.sapg.scot/media/5473/statement-on-pen-v-in-dental-infections.pdf>.

References

1. Public Health England. Dental antimicrobial stewardship: toolkit. 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dental-antimicrobial-stewardship-toolkit> (accessed November 2023).
2. Keep Antimicrobials Working. Seeking to ensure education on antimicrobial resistance is mandatory within the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. Available at: <https://bsac-kaw.co.uk/> (accessed November 2023).
3. NHS England. Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention. Updated 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention> (accessed November 2023).
4. NHS England. HTM 07-01: Safe and sustainable management of healthcare waste. November 2022. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/B2159jiii-health-technical-memorandum-07-01.pdf> (accessed November 2023).
5. Health Facilities Scotland. NHSScotland Waste Management Guidance (SHTN 3). Available at: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/publications/waste-management-shtn-3/> (accessed November 2023).