

# Healthy Children

January 2019 Parent Newsletter



## Articles

Is Tooth Decay a Disease?

Relaxation and Your Child

## Is Tooth Decay a Disease?

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of children. In fact, it is more common than obesity, asthma, and diabetes. The impact of tooth decay can have life-long effects. Tooth decay can cause pain and infection, as well as limit a child's ability to eat, grow, learn, play and attend school.

The good news is that tooth decay is preventable! To help your child prevent tooth decay:

- Brush two times a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.

- Eat more fruits and vegetables, and limit foods and drinks with added sugars.
- Drink tap water with fluoride, where available.
- Visit a dental professional regularly.
- Ask your dental professional about fluoride treatments and dental sealants to help protect your child's teeth.

➤ **For more information about oral health and oral health services, visit [www.ahs.ca/oralhealth](http://www.ahs.ca/oralhealth)**  
**For information about dental care for low income Albertans look under the Related Resources tab.**

Bacteria are becoming more resistant to the drugs we treat the disease with (antibiotics). Vaccination decreases the impact of this by preventing people from becoming infected with those resistant germs. Vaccination also means we don't have to treat people as often with antibiotics. For more information visit

<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/2/07-040089/en/>



## Relaxation and Your Child

Relaxation is a great way to help your child cope with stress. Regular relaxation calms the nervous system, boosts the immune system, sharpens concentration and promotes positive thinking.

**PMR – A Powerful Relaxation Tool.** Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) is designed to reduce stress, as well as physical problems such as stomachaches and headaches. It can even help your child sleep better.

**Quick Relax!** In this shortened version of the PMR approach, your child learns how to tense their whole body and then relax their muscles all at the same time. Follow these step-by-step instructions:

1. Lie down.
2. Scrunch up your face and tuck your head into your shoulders, tightening these muscles.
3. Cross your arms at your forearms and tighten your arms with your fingers grasping opposite elbows.
4. Tighten your belly, legs and



feet, pointing your toes towards your nose.

5. Hold this position and hold your breath for 5-10 seconds.
6. Say the word “relax” – and let your whole body go limp like a rag doll and breathe out.
7. Take a few deep breaths in and out.

### Tips for Parents

- Set aside 5 minutes to do this with your child.
- It's best not to learn in a stressful time. Practice first and then use when needed.
- Find a quiet place with no interruptions.

- Speak slowly and calmly while following the instructions.
- Pause after each instruction to allow time to carry it out.
- Make an audio recording for your child so your child can use it on their own.
- Do this for your own stress reduction. Your child will see it's for everyone.

In addition to PMR, try this relaxation practice with your child. Take in a long, deep breath. Count to four and breathe out for a count of five or six. Once they learn this, they can do it anytime they need to.