

ADHA Joins AAP in Support of Pediatric Oral Health

Protect Tiny Teeth project addresses oral health in pregnancy and infancy

CHICAGO, February 25, 2019 — Every baby deserves the very best right from the start, including the best oral health. Starting in February, as the oral health community turned its attention to the pediatric population, the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) began partnering with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on the Protect Tiny Teeth campaign.

“Early childhood caries (ECC) still affects more children than it should,” said ADHA Chief Executive Officer Ann Battrell, MSDH. “In some cases, mothers unknowingly and unintentionally pass the bacteria that cause ECC to their child. ADHA and AAP want to make sure that all pregnant women and new moms have the information necessary to ensure the best start for their child’s oral health.”

The Protect Tiny Teeth project is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its initial phases involved creation of an online toolkit to help oral health care providers educate pregnant women about their own and their child’s oral health.

Educational messages explain the relationship of bacteria to ECC, emphasizing that pregnancy itself does not cause mouth problems and that dental care is both safe and necessary for expectant mothers. Protect Tiny Teeth also teaches mothers how to care for their infant’s mouth before teeth erupt, and that the first dental visit should come before the first birthday. Resources are available in English and Spanish.

ADHA’s contribution to Protect Tiny Teeth involves creation of a companion toolkit specifically for the dental hygienist to use in parent education. ADHA is distributing additional messaging through its social media channels and publications. For more information, access ADHA’s Protect Tiny Teeth toolkit online at www.adha.org/protect-tiny-teeth.

About the American Dental Hygienists’ Association — The American Dental Hygienists’ Association (ADHA) is the largest national organization representing the professional interests of more than 185,000 dental hygienists across the country. Dental hygienists are preventive oral health professionals, licensed in dental hygiene, who provide educational, clinical and therapeutic services that support total health through the promotion of optimal oral health. For more information about the ADHA, dental hygiene or the link between oral health and general health, visit the ADHA at www.adha.org.