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## Oral Health and Young Children in Maine - 2011

- ❖ **In a Maine survey\* conducted in the 2008-2009 school year:**
  - ✓ **18% of the kindergarteners and 29.5% of third grade children who were screened had treated and untreated tooth decay.**
  - ✓ **Both kindergarteners and 3rd graders whose last dental visit was one or more years prior to the survey had significantly more (35.8%) untreated tooth decay as compared to children (14.4%) who had a dental visit within the past year.**
  - ✓ **According to parental reports, 27.4% of children in kindergarten and 73% of 3rd graders had dental sealants on their teeth.**
  - ✓ **Kids without dental insurance had significantly more (24.0%) untreated tooth decay as compared to children who had dental insurance (15.7%)**
  - ✓ **28.2% of the children in the survey who received free meals in school had decay experience, and 26.8% who received reduced price meals had decay experience, as compared to 20.3% who did not receive free or reduced meals.**

\* See the reverse of this page for more information from the survey

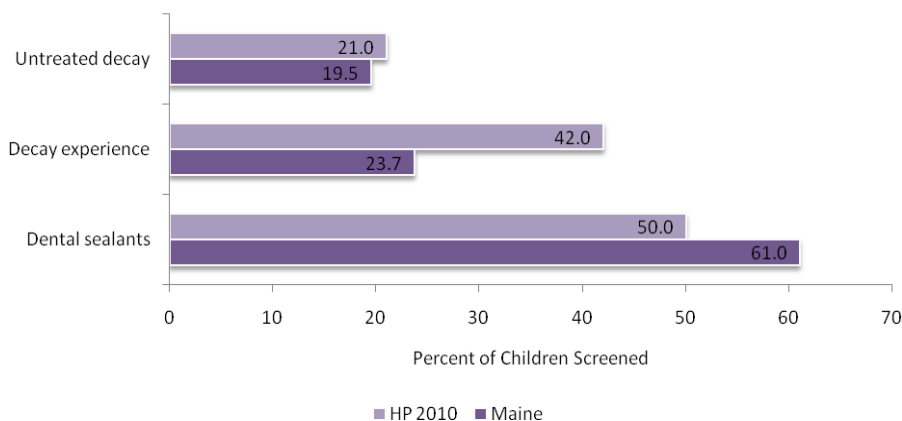
- ❖ **According to a national survey of children's health, eight out of ten children 1-17 years old in Maine visited a dentist one or more times for preventive dental care such as check-ups or dental cleanings in the 12 months previous to responding to the survey.**
- ❖ **According to data collected by the 2009 Maine Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS):**
  - **Nearly half (45%) of Maine women who had a baby had a dental visit during their pregnancy**
    - ✓ **A visit was more likely if the mother was 35 years old & older**
    - ✓ **A visit was least likely if the mother was younger than 25**
    - ✓ **Of those mothers with a visit, fewer were likely to be enrolled in WIC or be MaineCare members**
- ❖ **About 19% of new mothers said they needed to see a dentist for a problem while pregnant.**
- ❖ **61% of pregnant women who were not MaineCare members saw a dental provider compared to only 31% who were – that is, fewer MaineCare members saw a dentist.**

The oral health status of school-age children has a direct relationship to the oral health of pre-school age children. Interventions intended to improve the oral health of very young children are very likely to result in improvements in the health of children surveyed in school. For more information, contact the Oral Health Program at (207) 287-2361.

## Oral Health and Young Children in Maine – More from the Survey

1. Dental decay is a significant public health problem for Maine’s children.
2. Many children in Maine do not get the dental care they need.
  - ✓ Fourteen percent of the kindergarten children and about 17% of the third grade children screened had a need for dental care - with about 1% needing urgent dental care because of pain or infection. In 2008-2009 there were an estimated 85,000 kindergarten and 3rd grade children in Maine. If 1% were in urgent need of dental care, this means that 850 kindergarten and 3rd grade children were in the classroom in pain or with an oral infection. That’s just those two grades. If this percentage is extrapolated to all elementary school children in Maine, about 3,000 children might need urgent dental care because of pain or infection.
3. More than 60 percent of third grade children in Maine have dental sealants, a well accepted clinical intervention to prevent tooth decay in molar teeth.
4. There are significant oral health disparities in Maine with low-income children having the highest level of dental disease and the lowest level of dental sealants.
5. Maine has met the Healthy People 2010 objectives for reducing the prevalence of decay experience, reducing the prevalence of untreated tooth decay and increasing the prevalence of dental sealants among elementary school children.

Oral Health of Maine's Kindergarten and Third Grade Children  
Compared to Healthy People 2010 Objectives



6. Significant improvements in the oral health of Maine’s children have occurred over the last 10 years. Since 1999 there has been a substantial decline in the percent of kindergarten and 3rd grade children with decay experience. There has also been a significant increase in the percent of third grade children with sealants.

Oral Health of Maine's Kindergarten and Third Grade Children in  
1999, 2005 and 2009

