

19 June 2019

Simplyhealth Professionals launches annual tooth brushing campaign as research reveals one in five children only brush once a day



Brushing teeth for the recommended two minutes, twice a day, might sound like child's play, however recent research* from Simplyhealth Professionals has revealed that almost one in five children (18%) only brush their teeth once a day, and 2% don't even manage to brush every day. Furthermore, almost a quarter (24.7%) of five year olds have tooth decay, meaning that one in four children will start school with decay – as reported by Public Health England**.

The startling figures come as Simplyhealth Professionals launches its annual **Big Family Brush-Up** campaign, which runs from **24 June to 31 August 2019**, to help families to brush together and equip parents with practical tips and tools to engage their children in establishing a proper brushing routine.

Dr Catherine Rutland, Head Dental Officer at Simplyhealth, commented: “As the UK’s leading provider of dental payment plans, we want to help parents to establish good brushing habits at the earliest opportunity to help give children the best start in life, as well as providing easy and accessible information to support parents.”

Now in its fifth year, the Big Family Brush-Up challenges families to really focus on their brushing habits for a four-week period over the summer to ensure children are brushing thoroughly for two minutes, twice a day. To track and reward their progress, Simplyhealth Professionals are encouraging children to fill in a brushing chart every morning and night for four weeks, which they can download from the campaign microsite. At the end of the challenge, it’s hoped that families will have established a good oral health routine that they can continue into the future.

Families can visit www.bigfamilybrushup.co.uk to find a wealth of oral health information including Simplyhealth’s Little Book of Healthy Smiles booklet which provides dental advice and brushing tips from other parents; an animated step-by-step brushing video to inspire young brushers; a downloadable brushing chart, and lots of blogs and social media competitions. The campaign will also be supported by a well-known celebrity ambassador and mother-of-three, which will be announced at the start of the campaign.

To increase the impact of the campaign, Simplyhealth Professionals is encouraging its network of member practices to get involved and have provided a range of campaign materials and guidance for members to run the campaign in their own practices.

“Improving childhood brushing habits are fast becoming a focus for many national and regional initiatives,” says Catherine. “Supervised brushing schemes such as Childsmile and Teeth Team – the latter of which is supported by Simplyhealth - have been introduced into nurseries and schools to help tackle childhood tooth decay and inequalities. In addition,

earlier this month, the London Assembly recommended that all primary school children be taught how to clean their teeth properly by their teachers.

“As a dental professional, you’ll know that, even with the best intentions, getting children to brush thoroughly and regularly can be a challenge in many households. Parents are often at their wits’ end trying to get their youngsters to brush their teeth, and children are often very creative at devising ways to avoid brushing! In fact, two thirds of parents surveyed by Simplyhealth (64%)* said that getting their children to brush their teeth for two minutes, twice a day is a challenge.

“Taking part in a brushing challenge such as the Big Family Brush-Up can provide parents with a new approach to tackle teeth brushing and inspire children to discover that brushing can be fun and rewarding.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

*Simplyhealth Consumer Oral Health Survey 2019. Online survey of 1040 adults/parents with children aged 18 and under, conducted by Dynata (formally Research Now SSI) on behalf of Simplyhealth. Survey conducted between 24 January - 31 January 2019. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (18+).

**Public Health England, updated February 2018:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-oral-health-applying-all-our-health/child-oral-health-applying-all-our-health>

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Since 1872, we’ve been helping people to access healthcare through our health plans, charity partnerships and by being a voice in healthcare.

Today we're delighted to be the UK's leading provider of health plans, Denplan payment plans and pet health plans, which help individuals, families, employees and pets to find support with their health when they need it.

We don't have shareholders which means we are totally focused on making sure no one goes without the healthcare support they need, and why we are passionate about being a voice in healthcare and partnering with charities to reduce health inequality.

Last year we donated £1.13 million to our charity partners which equates to over 10% of our pre-tax profits. Additionally, our partnership with the Simplyhealth Great Run Series raised over £40 million for charitable causes.

To find out more visit www.simplyhealth.co.uk

Dental

Simplyhealth Professionals is the UK's leading dental payment plan specialist with more than 6,500 member dentists nationwide caring for approximately 1.7 million patients registered to a Denplan product.

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- Denplan for Children: routine and other agreed care + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Membership: registered with the dentist + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
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Simplyhealth Professionals also provide a wide range of professional services for its member dentists and their practice teams, including the Denplan Quality Programme and Denplan Excel Accreditation Programme. Plus regulatory advice, business and marketing consultancy services and networking opportunities.

Dentist enquiries telephone: 0800 169 9962.

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