

Oral hygiene initiative to improve oral health and health literacy among children through community centers (Pilot: Thai speaking communities/Thai Town, Los Angeles)

Introduction

Language and cultural differences often present barriers to oral health. Risk factors for poorer health outcomes include poor oral health, low health literacy, and acculturation. Health literacy is defined as the ability to understand and make required health decisions to function in the healthcare environment. Limited health literacy could cause a lack of awareness about the importance of oral hygiene practices, preventative measures, and the consequences of poor oral health. Language barriers can hinder effective communication between healthcare providers, educators, and community members. Acculturation is the process of adopting behaviors, beliefs, and cultural elements of the dominant group in society. Acculturation will tremendously impact traditional oral health practices: as individuals may adopt behaviors that differ from those in their home country, this would potentially result in improved oral hygiene habits. Recognizing and addressing language and cultural differences is fundamental to overcoming barriers in oral health initiatives. Tailoring the health programs towards the linguistics and cultural preferences of the Thai-speaking community in Thai Town will promote better understanding, engagement, and adoption of positive oral health practices, leading to improved health outcomes.

Background

It is estimated that only 12-26% of United States adults have proficient health literacy. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed a National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy (2010) with two main principles: (1) all people will have the right to health information that helps them make informed decisions, and (2) health services should be delivered in ways that are easy to understand and that improve health, longevity, and quality of life. However, health literacy remains an often overlooked aspect of patient centered care in the U.S. healthcare system. Dental health is an integral aspect of overall care; yet, overlooked by many and has a backseat in healthcare discussions. Poor dental health can have far-reaching consequences, affecting not only oral health but also contributing to systemic health concerns. Lack of access to dental care, preventive education, and awareness about the importance of oral hygiene can contribute to widespread dental health concerns.

Recommendations/Pilot Program

Thai Town, Los Angeles has been selected as a pilot for an oral hygiene initiative program to improve oral health and health literacy among the children in this community aimed to help grade school children residing in Thai Town. Thai Town was designated as an ethnic neighborhood in Los Angeles in 1999 and is home to over 10,000 Thais. 5.6 million Asians reside in California, 29% being Thai. In Los Angeles, 33% of Thais earned less than \$15,000 annual income. The Thai community lives in disadvantaged, substandard conditions with lack of access to basic health services. Resources in this community are limited and often times overlooked. As such, in the Thai Community Development Center, pamphlets will be made available to families with children ages 0 to 18 years old.

Summary

The goal of this pilot oral hygiene initiative program is to improve the oral health and health literacy of the children of Thai Town. Overcoming communication barriers and cultural differences with non-English speaking communities has led to improved health. All people, including the Thai community in Thai Town, LA have the right to health information that helps them make informed decisions. Ultimately, communicating interventions in the appropriate language will ensure complete understanding of treatment plans or medical concerns, leading to improved health literacy and optimized health outcomes. As there is often a shortage of pediatric healthcare services tailored to the community's specific needs, we hope that additional information about preventive care, vaccinations, and mental health services will be provided for this population after our pilot program.

Printable pamphlets:

Thai text



ฟันผุคืออะไร?

ฟันผุเกิดจากแบคทีเรียและน้ำตาลที่มาจากขนมและน้ำผลไม้และมันฝรั่งทอดและเมื่อแบคทีเรียได้กินน้ำตาลมันจะฟันกรดออกมาที่ทำให้ฟันผิวของฟันเริ่มแข็งแห้งและตาย

โรคเหงือกอักเสบคืออะไร?

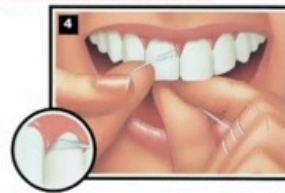
โรคเหงือกเกิดจากแบคทีเรียซึ่งจะทำให้เหงือกบวมแดงและมีเลือดออกได้ง่ายโรคเหงือกสามารถรักษาได้หากคุณกำจัดแบคทีเรียออก

โรคปริทันต์อักเสบคืออะไร?

โรคปริทันต์อักเสบเป็นการติดเชื้อชั้นสูงและไม่สามารถรักษาได้แบคทีเรียทำอะไรกระดูกแตกตัวซึ่งอาจทำให้เกิดการสูญเสียฟันได้



วิธีการใช้ไหมขัดฟัน



ใช้ไหมขัดฟันก่อนแปรงฟัน 1 ครั้งต่อวัน มัดไหมขัดฟันไว้รอบ ๆ นิ้วกลางและหยิกนิ้วด้วยนิ้วชี้ ทำให้เป็นรูปตัว C รอบฟันแต่ละซี่และขูดฟันผิวแต่ละซี่ที่ห้าครั้ง ตรวจสอบให้แน่ใจว่าคุณได้ไปถึงด้านล่างเหงือกเล็กน้อยด้วย

ทำไมใช้ไหมขัดฟันจึงสำคัญ?

ไหมขัดฟันสามารถช่วยกำจัดแบคทีเรียในส่วนที่แปรงสีฟันไม่สามารถเข้าถึงได้

ไหมขัดฟันเข้าถึงใต้เส้นเหงือกและระหว่างพื้นที่ของฟันที่แบคทีเรียหลบซ่อนอยู่

วิธีการแปรงฟัน



แปรงเป็นเวลา 2 นาทีวันละสองครั้ง! การแปรงฟันช่วยขจัดแบคทีเรียที่มีชีวิตซึ่งเป็นสาเหตุของฟันผุโรคเหงือกและโรคปริทันต์อักเสบ

ฟลูออไรด์คืออะไร?

- ฟลูออรีนเป็นเหมือนวิตามินสำหรับฟัน
- ช่วยเสริมความแข็งแรงของชั้นนอกของฟัน (เคลือบฟัน) เพื่อป้องกันฟันผุ
- โขี้เคี้ยวฟลูออไรด์สามารถพบได้ในยาสีฟันและน้ำยาล้างปาก



English version (reference)

What is dental bacteria?

(Bækthíreiy thāng thant krrm

khūx xarī?)

Dental bacteria is living and invisible. It covers your teeth in 12-24 hours and needs to be cleaned off by brushing twice per day.



What is calculus? (Khælkhūlāṣ khūx xarī?)

Calculus is dead bacteria stuck to the teeth. It can give the bacteria a perfect house to live in. It can appear as dark, rough staining. It can only be removed by dental professionals



Points to Remember

- Brush your teeth 2x per day for 2 minutes to remove plaque
- Floss once a day before you brush using a C-shape
- Visit your Dentist 1-2x per year to remove calculus
- Bleeding gums are the #1 sign of gum disease
- Always choose a toothpaste that contains fluoride
- Don't forget to brush your tongue
- Bacteria in your mouth can negatively affect the rest of your body
- Eating a lot of sugar causes more bacteria to stick to the teeth & creates cavities
- Smoking creates risk of oral cancer & affects the health of your mouth

Oral Hygiene Guide

A quick guide on how to keep your smile healthy and clean



Forms within 12 days

Funding and Next steps

Contact congressman/header of the Community Development Center leadership to request funding to print pamphlets. This pilot program hopes to take advantage of the recently distributed \$1 million in federal funds that were given to the Thai Community Development Center to complete the Thai Town Marketplace.

References

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