

## **Tweenagers**

9 to 12 year olds. They've been called tweenagers because they're in between children and teenagers.

Jude Becroft, a clinical psychologist & researcher of this age group in particular, talks of their developmental stage being referred to as the Rule/Role Stage where things become based more in reality than fantasy. They are starting to understand how the world really is, and what it takes to get along in the world. This age group is highly impressionable, and attaches themselves to celebrities & sports heroes.

As part of developing their own identity children start to watch others closely their peers become more influential.

Ponsonby Intermediate Guidance Counsellor Mitch Bahn says that because peers matter so much children can get very anxious about what their friends think. Being in or out of the crowd is very important. Much time and energy is spent on fitting in and friends become very big in your life. Tweens are trying to break away more from their parents and exert some independence, and parents are concerned about where they are and whom their friends are, so it's a set up scenario for conflict.

It's a juggling act they need limits but they also need freedom.

Sometimes if the issues seem overwhelming, kids feel better talking to someone nearer their own age. The Kidsline telephone counselling service hears from the tweenage age group a lot. Trained buddies answer the phones. 16 and 17-year-olds that operate in a mentoring capacity, helping callers to develop positive social behaviours and find helpful rather than destructive ways of dealing with life's challenges. Open between the hours of 4 to 6pm daily. The AKI # is (09) 522 4223, Christchurch is (03) 366 3661 or outside those areas - toll free on 0800 Kidsline or 0800 543 754

## **Hot Place To Hang Out**

### **Libraries**

There's a public library in every town and one in every suburb in the big cities. They're still primarily the place where you come to borrow books for the sheer pleasure of reading, but public libraries are also online, and that means you can access even more information.

At every public library there are several computer terminals for people to search the Internet. You can help yourself or ask a librarian to help you.

[www.aucklandcitylibraries.com](http://www.aucklandcitylibraries.com) is recognized as being in the top five library web pages in the world. This is a fantastic resource for teenagers particularly if you don't have a computer at home.

You can hire videos and CD-ROMs for which there's a small charge.

And for younger children, why not make the once-a-week reading time for preschoolers a part of your weekly routine it's sociable as well as educational.

### **Catch it on the Web**

[www.bbc.co.uk/education/wordsandpictures](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/wordsandpictures)

A useful site from the BBC, about reading and writing.

[www.childforum.com](http://www.childforum.com)

Edited by Dr Sarah Farquhar a teacher, academic and mother. Every imaginable topic to do with parenting here it seems. There's also a question and answer section.

### **Annabelles Recipes**

#### **CHOCOLATE RICE PUDDING**

? By using Meadow Fresh Calci Kids Chocolate Milk in this super-popular rice pudding children are getting great taste as well as 50 percent more calcium than Nature's Energy Chocolate flavoured milk.

? Calcium is so important for growing bodies and this dessert is a bonus for any home cook - it's super simple to make, very popular and it's easy on the budget - best of all - left-overs will not be a problem!

3 cups Meadow Fresh Calci Kids Chocolate Milk

1/4 cup short or medium-grain rice

1/2 cup chocolate chips or buttons

1 banana, sliced

A couple of knobs of butter

#### **METHOD**

Grease a 4 cup capacity casserole well and pour the milk into the dish. Sprinkle in the rice, chocolate chips and sliced banana. Stir gently with a fork. Place a few small knobs of butter on top.

Bake in a slow oven 150degC for 1 1/2- 2 hours or until the rice has absorbed the liquid and the texture is creamy and a brown skin has formed on top.

\* Serve with stewed fruit.

\*\*Please note no additional sugar has been added to this recipe as the chocolate milk and the addition of the chocolate chips will make it sweet enough.

Go to [www.meadowfresh.co.nz](http://www.meadowfresh.co.nz) for more info

### **Book It!**

Swallows and Amazons by Arthur Ransome. (Random House \$18.95) Teenage.

The Wild West Gang by Joy Cowley (Collins \$12.95) 6 to 10 years.

The Obvious Elephant by Bruce Robinson (Alliance Distribution \$18.95) 2 to 6 years.

Books selected by The Childrens Bookshop. Ph:(09) 376 7283 or (03) 366 5274

### **Health: Dental Health**

1. Why are baby teeth important/ does it really matter if these teeth develop cavities since theyll be replaced eventually anyway?

Baby (primary) teeth are important for eating, aesthetics and guiding the permanent teeth into the correct position, so its important to look after them. By treating small cavities before they get bigger, your child will not have to suffer unnecessary toothache or risk having to have the tooth extracted.

The front baby teeth are lost at around 6-7 years but the back molars stay until 10-11 years of age. The early loss of a back tooth can cause crowding of permanent teeth, which may need to be corrected later with braces. Another reason for treating cavities in baby teeth is that germs present inside the cavities can spread to healthy teeth, especially new erupting permanent teeth. This leads to more decay in these teeth.

2. What is the state of childrens teeth in NZ generally at the moment?

Nina Vassan, a paediatric dentist sees both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum and sees decay in both camps. Doesnt think its getting any better; is worrying. Prevention and education of parents is really important. She thinks diet is the key. Nina has removed teeth from 18 month olds.

3. How important is diet?

Diet is probably one of the most important factors contributing to decay in NZ. Its the frequency of snacks during the day, which is important, as well as the sugar content. The more often your child eats sugary foods and fizzy and fruit drinks, the more chance they have of getting cavities.

Sugar is often present in foods in which you wouldnt expect to find it eg fruit contains fructose, a natural sugar. Natural sugars have the same effect on your childs teeth as sugar in the sugar bowl. Honey, syrup, glucose, lactose, sucrose, dextrose and fructose are all sugars, so read the labels. Reduce in-between mealtime snacks. Sweet foods are best given at meal times when there is more saliva produced rather than between meals. Saliva helps neutralise the effects of sugar. Cheese at the end of a meal or for play lunch also neutralises acid. Encourage savoury snacks rather than chocolate, dried fruit and sweets. Raw vegetables and cheese are great snacks and are nutritious.

#### 4. Some tips on brushing.

Start cleaning your infants teeth as soon as they appear. Infants will start to get front teeth around 6-7 months of age and will generally have all 20 baby teeth by the age of 2 and a half or 3. You need to help your child with brushing at least twice a day until theyre 7 years old. Younger children just dont have the manual dexterity to clean their teeth adequately themselves.

You can start cleaning first with a damp facecloth and a smear of Junior toothpaste. By one year, start using a small, soft toothbrush with an easy-to-hold handle. The easiest way to brush is to sit your child in your lap and brush from behind (the motions are then similar to brushing in your own mouth). The technique of brushing is not as important as doing a thorough job and cleaning properly. Brush all surfaces of the teeth for five seconds each. Your child may insist on cleaning his teeth himself. At this stage its a good idea to make a game out of brushing and have a rule for taking turns.

First let them brush or suck on the toothbrush. This wont clean the teeth but theyll feel involved. Then take your turn. Even if they close their teeth together youll be able to clean the sides and front of the teeth. Perseverance is important.

An electric toothbrush is an option worth considering: it simplifies the process, as it only needs to be held next to the tooth. When you are selecting one, look for a small head and soft bristles. Avoid sharing brushes as this can spread germs around the family.

For children under 6 use a Junior toothpaste. This has less fluoride, important as young children often cant spit out properly and tend to swallow the toothpaste. If they swallow too much there is a chance the new adult front teeth may become mottled or have brown stains. Place only a smear of toothpaste on the brush and keep the tube out of reach. After brushing, dont rinse. Instead just get them to spit. That way they are less likely to swallow any and it keeps a protective layer of fluoride on their teeth.

## 5. What about flossing?

Start flossing once two back teeth are touching (you can use floss holders to help available from chemists - and a smear of toothpaste also helps deliver fluoride to this contact point).

## 6. Is fluoride beneficial to childrens teeth?

Yes, but we now know that fluoride placed on the tooth surface is more important in preventing decay than drops or tablets swallowed. The enamel is the outer protective layer of the tooth and it naturally contains fluoride. Teeth can be strengthened if fluoride in the enamel is renewed.

The main sources of fluoride are fluoridated tap water, fluoride toothpaste and fluoride mouthwashes. Most children get enough fluoride from the water, foods (sardines and fish a good source) and toothpaste. For some children who have a lot of decay and have non-fluoridated water (eg tank water) fluoride supplements such as mouthwashes may be needed. Check with your dentist first.

## 7. What are some of the big no-nos?

Drinking frequently from a bottle filled with juice or milk throughout the day and night can cause bottle caries. At night its worse as there is very little saliva produced so the liquid isnt diluted or washed away. The only safe drink at night is water. You can withdraw the bottle completely and be prepared for a few restless nights, or dilute the juice or milk in the bottle and slowly wean them off over 2 weeks.

Gently remove the bottle if your child falls asleep with the bottle in her mouth. Dont use the bottle when your child can drink from a cup. If your child uses a dummy, never put honey, jam or syrup on it as this can lead to extensive tooth decay. If it is kept in the mouth for longer than six hours a day, your child could develop an open bite, which means the front teeth dont meet.

## 8. When should your child see a dentist for the first time?

The standard advice has always been to take children to the dental clinic at their local school at around 3 years of age. Recently though, some professionals (including Nina) have started suggesting the first dental check can take place when your child is one.

This gives the dentist or dental nurse an opportunity to check the teeth for any problems, show you how to clean your babys teeth and give you information on how to reduce the chance of decay in these teeth. Even at one, some children may have early signs of bottle caries and may need topical fluoride applications or fillings. At this age treatment is done under general anesthesia.

9. Are some children more prone to developing decay than others? This may be because they have more decay-forming bacteria in their mouths; frequent consumption of carbohydrates, low saliva levels and low fluoride levels and are unable to brush adequately to remove all plaque (bacteria). Often there is a combination of factors involved.

10. Some tips on preparing children for a visit to the dentist

Talk to your child about the visit in a positive, matter of fact way; explain they will have a ride in the dental chair and will have their teeth counted; avoid words like needle, it wont hurt as this suggests it might hurt and children often only remember the word hurt.

### **Soapbox**

What language of love does your child speak? There are many ways of showing your love and we need to connect with which one it is our child uses. Perhaps they are gift givers, or like doing things for you (acts of service.) When you know their particular language communicate in it!