

Media Release

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WATER BEST FOR CHILDREN'S TEETH

Save the Children New Zealand have issued some tips to help parents take care of their children's dental health on National Oral Health Day today. (Friday 2 November).

The organisation has released the following tips for parents and caregivers:

- Water is the best drink for children
- Encourage children to regularly clean their teeth
- Only put water or milk in baby's bottles or sip cups
- Give healthy snacks like fruit and vegetables
- Check labels before buying food
- Get regular dental checks
- Limit packaged foods with high sugar content.

Save the Children Child Rights Advocacy and Research Director Jacqui Southey said, "Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic diseases seen in children and one of the leading causes of hospital admissions for New Zealand children. The common causes of tooth decay are high-sugar diet with limited or no oral hygiene practices, bottle feeding of sugary drinks (particularly at night) or consuming sugary drinking in feeding cups and sucking on pacifiers dipped in honey or other sugar-sweetened food and drinks.

"We'd like to raise people's awareness of the prevalence of tooth decay and the number of sugary foods available in our supermarkets. We've recently completed a submission to the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation calling for a review of the labelling of sugar in packaged foods and drinks.

"We'd like to see greater recognition of the impact food and drinks with a high sugar content are having on the health and development of children. Manufacturers, distributors and marketers of food and beverages must show responsibility and accountability for the negative health implications. We look forward to seeing the results of the sugar labelling review and changes being made that will make it easier for consumers to understand how much sugar is in the food they are choosing. We also hope changes will lead to a reduction the high levels of sugar in our foods."

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About Save the Children

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In New Zealand and around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

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