

# KUNGATSIAJUK

Newsletter (Vol. 2)

## SUPPORTING THE HEALTHY SMILES OF NUNATUKAVUT CHILDREN



### Introduction

In 2011, a research project was started in NunatuKavut. The project aimed to collect information about the oral health of children and youth in NunatuKavut. Our project is near completion and we would like to share some of our research findings with you.

**Kungatsiajuk** means “healthy smile” in Inuktitut, and ensuring that Nunatukavut youth have good oral health is what this project is about.

Oral health refers to the health of a person’s teeth, gums and whole mouth. Having good oral health is important, because it allows us to eat, speak and talk with each other without pain or embarrassment. Pain and infection in the mouth can cause us to miss time from school, work and other activities. In children, pain and infection can harm their growth and self-confidence.

Our eating habits and food choices are also directly affected by our oral health.

Learning about oral health is important, because it gives us information about the overall health of a community. This is because oral diseases also share many of the same risk factors as other diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Poor nutrition and smoking are related to all of these.

### WHAT’S BEEN DONE:

Our data comes from two sources: Oral examinations that were done on children and youth; and Storytelling sessions that were held with youth, caregivers, and other community members in southeast Labrador communities from Cartwright to Lodge Bay. Analysis of this information has begun, with publication of results to follow.

For more information about how we are sharing and using our results, turn to the next page!

Healthy baby teeth are important for proper development and nutrition.



\* The people of NunatuKavut identify as Inuit, Inuit descendants and those of mixed Inuit heritage.

# ORAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR NUNATUKAVUT

## Fact Sheets

From questions asked during our interviews, and general oral health questions we've had ourselves, we created fact sheets! There are 7 different sheets on a variety of topics:

### Fluoride

- Breast-feeding and Bottle Feeding
- Cavity Prevention
- Facts for Expecting Mothers
- Facts for Infants and Young Children
- Nutrition Facts

### Oral Health Mythbusters

These fact sheets are available on our project website, under the "Tips and Tools". Check it out at:

[www.kungatsiajuk.ca](http://www.kungatsiajuk.ca)

## Blog Posts

Once we finished our fact sheets, we realized that there were even more questions people might have about oral health, so we created blog posts in the style of 'ask a dentist'. We've had dentists answer some common questions about oral health relating to many topics!

Here are some of the topics that have been released:

- Fuzzy Coats on Teeth
- Teeth Whitening

### Fluoride

- Fruit and your Teeth
- Tooth Development

These blogs are available on our project website under the "Tips and Tools". Check them out at: [www.kungatsiajuk.ca](http://www.kungatsiajuk.ca)

## Toolkit coming soon!

As part of the knowledge translation piece of this research, a toolkit regarding oral health in children and youth is being developed for community organizations, parents, caregivers, public health nurses, and teachers.

There are four main sections in this toolkit all relating to oral health:

- Learning about teeth
- Caring for your teeth
- Visiting the dentist
- Making healthy choices

There will be informative and fun content in these toolkits, so be sure to check them out at local family resource centres, public health clinics, and schools.

## FACTS

**Milk and dairy products have high amounts of calcium, phosphate, and proteins that help prevent cavities!**

**Not all dairy is created equally- chewing hard cheese is especially good for teeth, and contains less sugar than milk.**

**How often you have sugary foods and drinks is more important than how much sugar you have at one time.**



**Even though diet soda does not directly cause cavities, it is acidic and can lead to enamel erosion. This can make teeth sensitive and more prone to developing dental caries.**

# KNOWLEDGE SHARING EVENTS

## SOME FACTS

Infants should have their first visit to a dental health professional within 6 months of their first tooth eruption, or by their 1st birthday- whichever comes first!

Teeth should be brushed at least twice a day- with a rice size amount of toothpaste for children under 3 years, and a pea size amount over 3 years.

*White teeth are not necessarily healthy teeth. Healthy teeth come in all shapes, sizes and colours!*

## YOUTH FILMMAKING WORKSHOP

Battle Harbour, Labrador: August 2014

This event brought 10 youth from Southeast Labrador together to learn about filmmaking from Dr. Jamie Skidmore, a professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The task of the weekend was to create a video showing health professionals what life is like on the coast- from a youth perspective. This video is titled “Knowing me, Knowing you: A Message to Dental Professionals from the Youth of NunatuKavut.” Check it out on our website [kungatsiajuk.ca](http://kungatsiajuk.ca) under the “For Youth” tab.

## ORAL HEALTH AND INDIGENOUS YOUTH FORUM

Halifax, Nova Scotia: February 2015

A forum was held to open up the discussion among Aboriginal community partners, oral health researchers, and policy makers. The purpose of this forum was to use the stories from youth who participated in our study, to start discussions at a national level as to how to best address their oral health issues. The video created from the Youth Filmmaking Workshop was unveiled at this event by two of the youth involved.

**Fluoride is a naturally occurring substance and is in many foods and beverages. Fluoride use is one of the most important ways to prevent dental cavities.**

## ‘NEXT STEPS’ WORKSHOP

Port Hope Simpson, Labrador: October 2015

We held this workshop to brainstorm next steps with community members and healthcare professionals. As the Kungatsiajuk project is coming to a close, we are looking forward to continuing our work relating to this project, and this workshop was a way for us to gauge community interest/direction in subsequent research projects.

**Smoking not only causes your teeth to yellow, but it also irritates tissues and reduces blood flow to the gums. This can lead to bad breath, cavities, sores, and infections. Smoking can also cause bone loss in the jaw, and increase the risk of oral cancers and dental disease.**



Youth at Film Making Workshop in Battle Harbour



# Meet the Research Team



Photo of Community  
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FACEBOOK:**  
*Kungatsiajuk: Supporting the  
healthy smiles of  
NunatuKavut children*

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION AND  
UPDATES, VISIT OUR  
PROJECT WEBSITE:**  
[www.kungatsiajuk.ca](http://www.kungatsiajuk.ca)

**GET INVOLVED**  
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