

# Wisconsin Healthy Smiles Survey

## Kindergarten and Third-Grade Children

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services carried out the Wisconsin Healthy Smiles Survey, a statewide assessment of the oral health status of kindergarten and third-grade children. More than 2,600 kindergarten and 2,700 third-grade children in public schools participated in the survey. Dental professionals completed screenings following the Basic Screening Survey protocol developed by the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors. Results among third-grade children were compared to similar surveys conducted in 2001-2002, 2007-2008, 2012-2013, and the 2017-2018 school years. Overall, data from the 2022-2023 school year show tooth decay among Wisconsin's children has not improved. In fact, the oral health of our third-grade children is worse than it was five years ago.

### Tooth decay can impact a child's life in the following ways:



Learning



Self-esteem



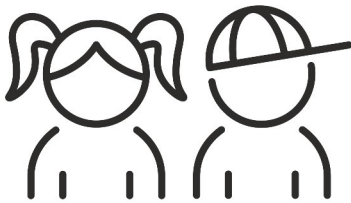
Speaking



Sleeping



Eating



Students of color in kindergarten were **2x** as likely to have untreated decay compared to non-Hispanic white students.



Children in lower-income schools had **more untreated decay** compared to higher-income schools.



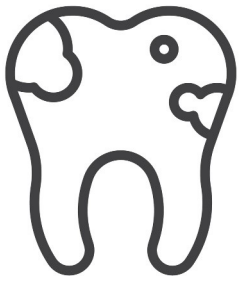
**1** in **5** kindergarteners had untreated decay and needed treatment.



**1** in **4** third graders had untreated decay and needed treatment.



**3** in **5** third graders had at least one molar that needed a sealant.



**15%** of children in each grade had **multiple** teeth with untreated decay.



Non-Hispanic Black third graders were **less likely** to have a sealant present on a permanent molar compared to non-Hispanic white students.

## How does Wisconsin compare to the Healthy People 2030 objectives?



### Needs improvement

Reduce the proportion of children and adolescents with lifetime tooth decay.



### Objective met (third grade)

Increase the proportion of children and adolescents who have dental sealants on one or more molars.



### Needs improvement

Reduce the proportion of children and adolescents with active and untreated tooth decay.

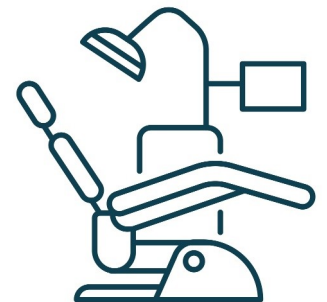
## How can you help improve children's oral health?

Parents or guardians:

- Find a dental provider for your child at an early age.
- Promote oral health habits such as:
  - Brushing twice per day with a fluoride toothpaste.
  - Drinking fluoridated water.
  - Limiting sugar intake.
  - Eating healthy foods.
- Determine if your child will receive dental sealants from your dental provider or at a school-based sealant program like [Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile](#).

Dental professionals:

- Promote fluoridated water and fluoride toothpaste.
- Enroll as a Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus provider.
- Provide dental services to lower income families.
- Serve as a Seal-A-Smile referral.
- Place dental sealants as recommended.
- Provide preventive care for children starting at age 1.



Review the full Wisconsin Healthy Smiles Report at [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00589.pdf](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00589.pdf).

