

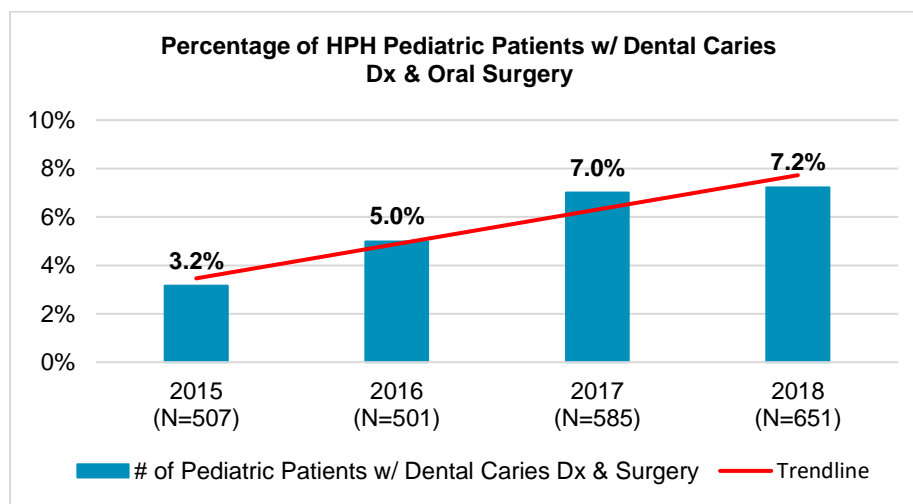
HHP Clinical Bulletin on Pediatric Dental Care

Unfortunately, our Keiki do not get the dental care we'd expect in Hawai'i.

In 2017, Hawaii had the highest rate of tooth decay in the U.S.; 71% of our third graders had tooth decay.¹

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood despite the fact that it is preventable.² Furthermore, early childhood caries are associated with impaired growth, decreased weight gain, low self-esteem and poor quality of life. In our system, we have pediatric patients experiencing these consequences, some of them even requiring oral surgery.

In 2018, 658 pediatric patients had a visit recorded in our system associated with a dental caries diagnosis.



It could be better. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends fluoride as an effective method of dental caries in children. It is recommended that fluoride varnish be applied to the primary teeth of all infants and children starting at the age of six months or primary tooth eruption.³ Additionally, other published studies demonstrate that the application of fluoride varnish in primary care settings benefits children, in particular those with limited access to dental care.^{4,5}

Please help promote the application of fluoride varnish by either directly administering it, encouraging your patients to ask their dentist, or, if not available, sending them to a pediatric dentist who does. The following Hawai'i pediatric dentists adhere to the AAP practice recommendations – including the use of fluoride varnish.

¹ The Hawaii State Department of Health. (2017, October 16). *DOH News Release: Hawaii State Department of Health Leads Oral Health Screening Initiative for Every Head Start and Early Head Start Student* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://governor.hawaii.gov/newsroom/latest-news/doh-news-release-hawaii-state-department-of-health-leads-oral-health-screening-initiative-for-every-head-start-and-early-head-start-student>

² AAP Recommends Fluoride to Prevent Dental Caries. (2014, August 25). Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/AAP-Recommends-Fluoride-to-Prevent-Dental-Caries.aspx>

³ Moyer, V. A. (2014). Prevention of Dental Caries in Children From Birth Through Age 5 Years: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *Pediatrics*, 133(6), 1102-1111. doi:10.1542/peds.2014-0483

⁴ Lewis, C., Lynch, H., & Richardson, L. (2005). Fluoride Varnish Use in Primary Care: What Do Providers Think? *Pediatrics*, 115(1). doi:10.1542/peds.2004-1330

⁵ *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General*. (2000, July). Retrieved from <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/research/data-statistics/surgeon-general>

Patients should check with the dentist office or their dental insurance carrier to confirm if the dentist is accepting new patients and before receiving treatment.

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