

# STAY WELL

## FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

***It is important that your child develops healthy habits from an early age. These include those habits that maintain good oral health such as toothbrushing, a nutritious diet and protection from the sun. Your child's dental professional will suggest how often they should have a dental checkup. Don't delay if your child develops a problem - have it checked immediately.***

### Dental Visits

*Dental visits for young children allow early identification of oral health problems. Dental professionals, who are likely to examine your child's mouth during a visit, include Dentists, Dental Hygienists and Dental Therapists. A Dental Assistant will usually assist the dental professional. Whilst visiting the dental professional you should discuss the option of dental sealants and seek advice about any oral health concerns you may have.*

### Dental Sealants

*A dental sealant is a tooth-coloured plastic film that is professionally applied to the deep grooves of back teeth where decay most often starts. Germs from plaque live in these grooves and make acid, which causes tooth decay (dental caries). Dental sealants assist in preventing the build up of plaque acids on the enamel surface of teeth and they are of value in the prevention of dental decay. A good time to apply dental sealants is when permanent (adult) back teeth are fully erupted. Your dental professional will discuss with you whether your child will benefit from dental sealants.*

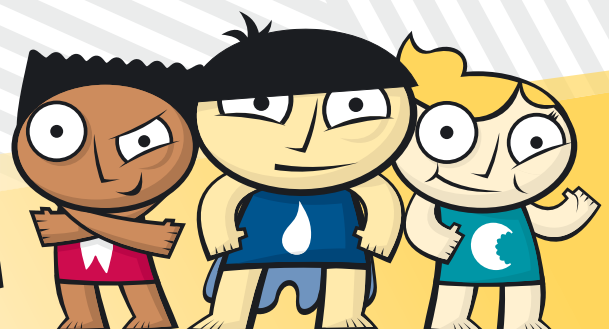
### Thumb & Finger Sucking

*Most children stop sucking their fingers and/or thumbs between 2 and 4 years of age. However, prolonged sucking on thumbs and/or fingers beyond 6-7 years of age (when permanent teeth begin to come through) may cause teeth to grow out of line. This can affect your child's appearance and ability to bite and speak properly. If the habit continues into primary school years, seek advice from a dental professional.*

#### Who to ask for more information

- ★ **Dentist, Dental Therapist or Dental Hygienist**
- ★ **Maternal and Child Health Nurse**
- ★ **Family Doctor**
- ★ **School Nurse**
- ★ **Cancer Council of Victoria**

**DEFENDERS<sup>™</sup>  
OF THE TOOTH**



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## FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

### How parents can protect their children from the sun

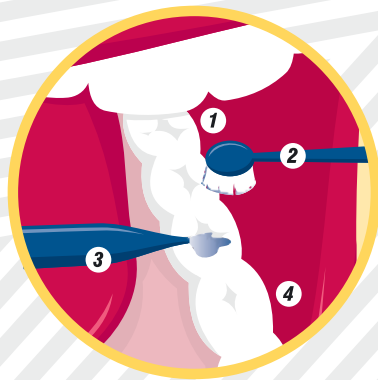
Ensure The Cancer Council SunSmart practices become familiar to your child. Keep his/her face, including lips, protected from the sun and its harmful ultra violet (UV) rays. This will reduce the risk of skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in Australia today.

#### SunSmart says...

- ★ Try to plan outdoor activities before 10am and after 3pm (daylight savings time) as UV radiation levels are at their highest in the middle of the day and your child's skin can burn more easily.
- ★ Remind your child to wear a hat, preferably broad brimmed, that will help protect the whole face, including the lips, from the sun.
- ★ Encourage your child to play in the shade. However, remember that UV rays can be reflected onto your child even when they are in the shade, so it's important to wear sunscreen and protective clothing such as a hat.
- ★ It's best to use SPF30+, broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen.

### Placing Dental Sealants

1. The chewing surface of a molar contains natural pits and grooves, where dental decay occurs most often.
2. The tooth is thoroughly cleaned before applying the sealant.
3. The liquid sealant is placed onto the surface of the tooth and flows into the pits and grooves. The liquid is then set with an ultra violet light.
4. The pits and grooves are now sealed and the tooth surface is smooth and easy to clean.



#### Other fact sheets for parents include:

