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How Do I Look After My Kids Teeth?

Garth Pettit
4 Your Smile 2 Shine (Jun 23, 2011)
eBook $4.99 (87pp)
978-1-920712-27-3

“Brush your teeth” has long been the instruction for people of all ages on how best to take care of the mouth, but millions still have cavities and other oral-health problems every year.

Australian dentist Garth Pettit wondered why so many people—particularly children—were still having problems if “brush your teeth” was the right advice. He determined that instead of merely brushing their teeth, people need to brush their whole mouths. He calls his advice “painting” the mouth, and the technique, along with the basics of oral health, is presented in his series of ebooks called *How Do I Look After My Kids Teeth?*

The twelve-book series features the SmileShine Gang, a group of cartoon animals that is learning about dental hygiene methods from GarGar the dentist. Though the title sounds like it is geared toward parents, children are spoken to throughout the books.

Petit calls his method “Oral 7” hygiene because there are seven things in the mouth that need to be cleaned: the teeth, gums, tongue, floor of the mouth under the tongue, roof of the mouth, cheeks, and inside the lips. In the first book, each part of the mouth is associated with one of the characters, and sometimes their pictures are used in place of the words for the parts of the mouth they represent, a unfortunate strategy that is quite confusing.

The series main idea is that potentially harmful substances are introduced to the mouth every time something is consumed, and these particles, which are too small to see, get everywhere in the mouth, not just on the teeth. The solution is to brush everywhere by “painting” the mouth. To further illustrate the essentials of oral health care, Pettit asks children to draw pictures to represent things like plaque and tooth decay. This is a little gruesome, but likely will help kids of a certain age remember the lessons.

These books get quite repetitive and are probably most helpful for kids who are old enough to read but not so old that they won’t change their current dental habits. They are all quick reads, which is good because it is not until the eleventh of twelve books that Pettit actually describes his mouth-cleaning method.

Adults making an effort to improve the whole family’s oral health-care habits should read this series along with their kids.

SARAH E. WHITE (January 2, 2013)

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