



Knox County Health Department

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KCHD's Service Spotlight: Free Dental Health Event for Children

This week's spotlight highlights KCHD's School-based Dental Prevention Program

Knoxville, Tenn. — This summer the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) School-based Dental Prevention Program will host a series of free dental health events for children and young adults from 4 to 21 years of age. Coordinated in partnership with community organizations, the next series takes place at the Knox County Schools Welcome Center, 535 Chickamauga Ave., by appointment on July 9 and 12. At the events, children and young adults will be able to receive several services including dental education, screenings, sealants and fluoride varnish. More information about this program and the free dental health events is available by calling 865-215-5773.

"Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood, yet it is largely a preventable disease," said Sarah Naill, dental hygienist with KCHD's School-Based Dental Prevention Program. "Tooth decay is more common than asthma and hay fever, and if left untreated, can cause abscesses, tooth loss, low self-esteem and weight issues."

Funded by the Tennessee Department of Health, KCHD's School-Based Dental Prevention Program offers free preventive dental services to children from kindergarten to eighth grade in the school setting. Services include oral health education, oral exams and screenings, referrals for care, follow-up of immediate need, dental sealants, fluoride varnish application, and Silver Diamine Fluoride, if needed. Schools with 50 percent or more of its enrolled students on free and reduced lunch are eligible for the program. A list of participating schools for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year is available [here](#). All children in participating schools receive dental education on daily brushing, oral hygiene, nutrition and dental sealants. They are also given a bag of dental supplies to begin practicing good oral hygiene habits at home.

According to KCHD's [2019 Community Health Assessment](#), children with poor oral health miss more school and receive lower grades than those with better oral health, while adults lose more school or work hours for urgent, unplanned dental visits. Severe dental caries is associated with feelings of embarrassment, withdrawal and anxiety.

About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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