

# HOW MUCH SUGAR IS HIDING IN YOUR TROLLEY?

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This year for Dental Health Week (DHW), the Australian Dental Association want to help Australians to become sugar savvy.

Research shows that many Australian consumers look to the Nutrition Information Panel (NIP) when purchasing foods and sugar is one of their greatest concerns. However, research also shows that many people still do not know how to interpret the messages they are receiving about sugar.

We want individuals to have the ability to look at their own sugar intake and know if it is appropriate or potentially causing their mouth or body damage. After all, we want everyone to keep their teeth for life.

## Key Sugar Messages

- Consume no more than 6 teaspoons (24 grams) of free sugar per day.
- Choose foods with less than 10 grams of sugar per 100 grams.
- Look out for hidden sugars when purchasing foods and drinks.

## DHW General Messages

- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth daily with floss or interdental brushes.
- Eat a nutritious diet, low in sugar.
- Visit the dentist regularly for check-ups and preventative care.

## How you can play a part

No doubt you frequently have conversations over the course of a normal working week with patients about sugar consumption as well as the need to brush and floss regularly.

Dental Health Week gives fresh opportunities to begin or keep conversations going with your patients. It is important that dentists get involved in discussing sugar and sugar consumption with patients as well as their community. When engaging in such discussions, the below research may help you to frame your conversations.

### Consumers have been shown to:

- Think that sugar from fruit is less fattening than that from added sugar.
- Demonstrate confusion around the difference between natural and added sugars. And let's not forget about the confusion that can occur once the term 'free sugars' is thrown into the mix!
- Believe that kilojoules are the measure of energy of the sugar content of a food and they therefore think that by purchasing low energy foods, this meant they were buying foods low in sugar.
- Find 'total sugars' more of a concern than 'added sugars', with some thinking these sugars are separate entities.
- Report that the message they receive most around sugar relates to weight gain.

Research has shown that consumers who associate what they eat with health outcomes, report trying to limit or avoid sugar intake. Self-efficacy (a factor of health literacy – a social determinant of health) underpins these behaviours and the level of attention paid to the health aspects of the foods they eat.

## Getting the message out there

Using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to amplify your message is a cost-effective way to get oral health messages across to your patients and the larger community.

Although your dental clinic may not be able to run a face-to-face health promotion activity depending on social distancing requirements come DHW, this does mean interacting with patients and your community is out of the picture.

Here are some ways you can try to have Dental Health Week and sugar conversations:

- Decorate your clinic with the provided DHW decorative bunting and posters to make patients aware of the week. This may even encourage them to strike up a conversation on the topic of sugar or nutrition.
- Hold a Facebook live event where you can communicate with patients to provide information, which could include a question and answer session about sugar, oral health and hygiene.
- Include interactive posts on your social media pages. An example of this could be asking followers to guess the amount of sugar present in food and drink products with surprisingly high sugar content, such as pre-bought marinade or fruit juices.
- Run an online colouring-in competition for children and families that frequent your practice. You will find a colouring-in picture in the DHW Digital Resource Kit. Alternatively get children's minds working by having them include an important fact about sugar and teeth or get them to suggest three tooth-friendly foods. Post the entries on your Facebook page for people to like to find a winner.
- Hold a webinar for health professionals in your town or district on oral health and interdisciplinary care. Find the dedicated DHW PowerPoint in the DHW Digital Resource Kit; alternatively you will find PowerPoint presentations in the ADA Oral Health Promotion Toolkit at [www.ada.org.au/ohp-toolkit](http://www.ada.org.au/ohp-toolkit).
- Share the DHW digital resources on your practice's social media platforms – you will find these in the DHW Digital Resource Kit. Do not forget to use #dentalhealthweek so that the ADA can see your posts.
- Share the ADA's podcast Sugar Savvy through social media platforms to help get it into people's ears.

Times such as what we have experienced this year can act as encouragement to get creative and think outside the box. This may give you the opportunity to take Dental Health Week to places it might not ordinarily go.

## Everything you need

No doubt you've got lots of ideas for promoting Dental Health Week! To help you make the most of them, we've created a resource kit, downloadable at [www.dentalhealthweek.com.au](http://www.dentalhealthweek.com.au), containing:

- A3 and A4-sized posters and bunting for decoration.
- Email signatures and e-newsletter banners to add pizzazz to your digital communications.
- Factsheets to post online or attach to emails sent out to patients – this includes 5 new sugar fact sheets.
- DHW PowerPoint presentation for your appearances before eager digital audiences.
- Colouring-in activity sheet for kids.
- Social media content for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

This year on the Dental Health Week website, you will find sugar education in both written and audio forms with the inclusion of the ADA's Sugar Savvy podcast. These are short episodes that focus on imparting information on sugar and oral health to listeners.

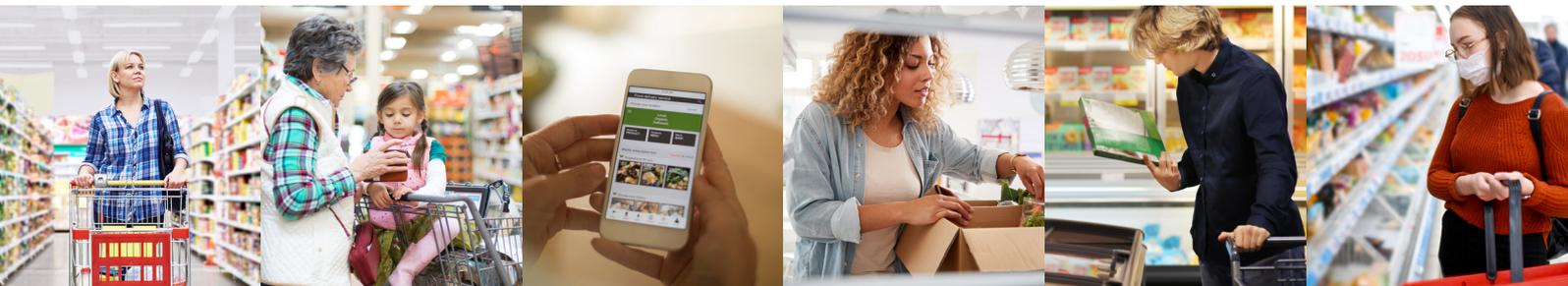
These resources are ready to help support you, and your ideas, for connecting with your patients and the wider community, whether it be face-to-face or digitally.

You can either use the content on the Dental Health Week website or repost the ADA's social media posts, adding photos and video of your own or make your own content from scratch. Just remember to keep it short, sweet and to the point! And always make sure you engage with everyone who interacts with you.

ADA members will also find additional download-and-go health promotion content in the Oral Health Promotion Toolkit at [www.ada.org.au/ohp-toolkit](http://www.ada.org.au/ohp-toolkit).

## Advertising Guidelines

Keep in mind with any activities in this space, the Dental Board of Australia imposes limits on what you can and can't say. It's important you don't give specific advice online, post images without permission, or use testimonials in any part of your online activity. To be safe, make sure you read the Advertising Guidelines and Social Media Guidelines available at [www.dentalboard.gov.au](http://www.dentalboard.gov.au).



## Tell us about your Dental Health Week Event!

We love that you're willing to be involved in Dental Health Week. We want to hear all about it and promote it too. Email your photos, stories, links, articles, or feedback to [contact@ada.org.au](mailto:contact@ada.org.au). With your permission, the best and brightest Dental Health Week events will be showcased in the ADA News Bulletin, through ADA social media accounts and the Australian Dentist e-newsletter.

Find out more at [dentalhealthweek.com.au](http://dentalhealthweek.com.au)