

Aims

Aim

60% of five year olds in the Durham Dales had been identified as experiencing dental disease (1999/2000). Government target was to reduce this figure to 30%.

Objectives

To promote the use of milk as a vehicle for fluoride for the benefit of children's oral health.

To target 20 schools in the Durham Dales where more than two thirds of the children had experience of dental disease by the age of five.

To provide Oral Health Promotion to targeted groups within the Durham Dales PCT area.

Location

The milk fluoridation initiative is targeted towards 20 schools across Wear Valley and Teesdale with NRF funding directed to the 14 identified schools in Wear Valley.

Wear Valley District Council includes the Durham Dales rural area with villages based upon agriculture and larger settlements based upon light industry and ex-coal mining.

Historically many of the Upper Weardale villages were based around the mining of lead, silver and other minerals.

The Intervention Strategy

Staffing

Oral Health Promotion Worker.

Funding

NRF funding for 14 targeted schools in Wear Valley. Remaining six schools funded via Durham Dales PCT Joint Development Fund

Operating method

After consultation with the headteachers of the relevant schools, all parents are sent a letter to explain about the scheme along with an information leaflet so that the parents can make an informed choice. The registration forms are sent to the schools for completion by the parents. The parents make a choice between their children not drinking milk, if they drink ordinary wholemilk at 13p per day, or whether they drink the fluoridated milk FREE of charge.

The consent forms are collected and the children are registered on to the system with Cool Milk at Schools Ltd. All the consent forms are sent to the Oral Health Promotion Worker who keeps an individual record for each child and follows the pattern of milk drinking.

ACC Dairies produce and deliver the milk to the individual schools.

Borrow Milk Foundation is available to offer guidance as appropriate.

Systems are in place to ensure that each child receives only one carton of the correct type of milk per day and does not receive additional cartons as the positive consent procedures relate only to the provision of one carton of milk per day.

Children are free to opt-in and opt-out of the initiative provision at any point.

The Oral Health Promotion Worker has access to the Cool Milk at School Ltd Website where she can gain up to date information on current milk drinkers. The Oral Health Promotion Worker is in the process of establishing a database to keep a closer eye on the current situation for each child. Such factors can include data on: when did a child start in the initiative; when/if the child deregistered and if so why and when; and if the child later rejoined the initiative; if the child changed schools etc. By undertaking this procedure a longitudinal dataset is being established which would be used, in the future, as part of the evaluation of the initiative in terms of oral health improvement.

There will be Dental Health resource development initiatives as a follow-up to this initiative which will utilise NRF funding.

The Oral Health Promotion Worker will additionally be involved in National Oral Health Events such as National Smile Week and Mouth Cancer Awareness Week



Achievements of the Intervention

Main achievements

For fluoridated milk the uptake has been good.

The outcome with regard to the reduction of dental disease experience in school-age children is a long term measure.

There has been an immediate increase in the numbers of children benefiting in health terms from drinking one third of a pint of milk each school day, in terms of NRF Floor Targets as relates to health this intervention is a long term measure.

Whilst not directly linked to NRF floor targets. Durham Dales PCT understands that NRF can be used to support areas that are not identified by floor targets. The PCT understands that this area of health improvement is a key NHS health inequality target for which NRF can be used.

Mainstreaming Strategy

Milk provision was always available in the schools at a costing of 13p per day (free to under fives). With Durham Dales PCT and NRF funding the children who 'opt-in' can benefit from drinking milk containing fluoride and the nutritional benefits this entails free of charge for the next five years.

The Durham Dales PCT Board has agreed to mainstream the initiative by 100 percent following the ending of NRF funding.

Learning Curve

Consent of Headteachers is for the provision and delivery of the initiative within schools. Consultation with parents via the school in the preparatory stages of the initiative tends to have a positive effect in terms of acceptance of the initiative and participation rates and is an essential part of the informed consent process.

Of those schools targeted three have said 'No', however one school may be changing its mind. For the other two schools the Heads felt there was already too much going on within the school to find the time for this initiative. One of the schools which said 'No' has an infant feeder school where the uptake of fluoridated milk by the children is 100%.



Oral Health Initiative

Contact:

Debbie Ramshaw
Tel 01388 662798

Email: debbie.ramshaw@durhamdalespct.nhs.uk

NRF Priority:

Health

NRF Authority:

Wear Valley

NRF Funding Level:

Medium

PTO for additional information

Lead Agent:

Durham Dales Primary Care Trust (Oral Health Promotion Worker)

Main Partners:

Cool Milk at School Ltd, Borrow Milk Foundation, ACC Dairies

Location:

Targeted to the 20 schools in Wear Valley and Teesdale in which more than two thirds of five year olds had experienced dental disease. These schools were identified in a dental health census survey in 1999/2000

Main achievements:

The outcome with regard to the reduction of dental disease experience in school-age children is a long term measure.

There is an immediate increase in the numbers of children benefiting in health terms from drinking one third of a pint of milk each school day, in terms of NRF Floor Targets as relates to health this intervention is a long term measure

The logo for 'Cool Milk at School Ltd' is enclosed in a rounded rectangular box with an orange border. The words 'Cool Milk' are written in a large, blue, cursive script font. Below this, the words 'at School Ltd' are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

Key Lessons

The Oral Health Initiative has the benefit of facilitating the 'springing-up' of other initiatives and raising the profile of oral health as an issue.

This initiative is targeted to those areas, which need the most help with tackling inequalities in oral health.

The initiative gives parents the individual choice as to whether they want their child to receive the benefits of drinking the fluoridated milk.

The children are also gaining the nutritional benefits of receiving a third of a pint of milk.

Other health professionals feel that there are other schools, within the Wear Valley, who would also benefit greatly from this milk fluoridation programme.

In those cases where parental consultation has been undertaken the initiative has been adopted within schools.

The 'opt-in' nature of the initiative ensures a positive commitment from parents and children with regard to fluoridated milk consumption.

This initiative has the most potential benefit if started before 4 years of age and continued for at least 3 years. In light of this, work is underway with agencies in pre school provision, which feed into the targeted schools.

Contact Details

Debbie Ramshaw, Oral Health Promotion Worker, Butterwick Hospice, Woodhouse Lane, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6JU

Tel 01388 662798

Mobile 07796694106

Email: debbie.ramshaw@durhamdalespct.nhs.uk