



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

May 15 Deadline for School Dental Exams Approaches

Health District Has Already Conducted Hundreds of Required Exams

Children in Kindergarten, 2nd and 6th grades that have not yet had required dental exams risk having their report cards withheld if they do not do so by a May 15 deadline.

Health District dentist Dr. Trina Blunt has already provided the required exams to over 400 schoolchildren, and urges parents whose children have not yet received their dental checkups to make appointments right away.

According to the new law, if parents miss the deadline for their child's dental exam, the report card will still be released if they can show that the child will get an exam within 60 days. Advancing to the next grade will not be affected by the withheld report cards – the report card is meant to be an incentive to visit the dentist, not a punishment.

Starting in January 2006, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District dental staff began going directly to area schools to offer exams and preventive dental services to all school children. The dental health visits help children in Kindergarten, 2nd and 6th grades get their required dental exams. But the program also provides exams to children in other grades, along with fluoride treatments to all children who opt to take advantage of the program.

In addition, school children who qualify for a free or reduced lunch at school are eligible for dental sealants.

Cavities are a common problem for children – and the problem begins when they are quite young. Tooth decay affects nearly a fifth of 2–4-year-olds, more than half of 8-year-olds, and more than three-fourths of 17-year-olds.

Dental exams can catch problems early and fluoride treatments are effective at preventing tooth decay.

Students who are found to have dental problems that require more intensive care will be referred to the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District's Division of Dental Health for these services.

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