

Tooth Decay in Australia

- Dental caries (tooth decay) is the most prevalent health problem in Australia
- 1 in 2 children aged 6 years have tooth decay in their deciduous (baby) teeth
- 1 in 2 children aged 12 years have tooth decay in their permanent (adult) teeth
- 9 out of 10 adults have had experience of tooth decay
- 3 in 10 adults aged 25-44 years have untreated tooth decay
- 1 in 7 people aged 15+ years had toothache in the past year
- Tooth decay costs about \$4.6 billion per year in direct health expenditure
- In 2013-14 there were more than 63,000 hospitalisations due to dental causes
- Dental caries has a significant indirect costs including social and emotional impact, and may lead to:
 - pain
 - difficulty with eating
 - poor nutrition
 - bad breath
 - sleepless nights
 - poor self-esteem
 - loss of productivity
 - emergency hospital presentations
- Increased frequency and amount of sugar are strongly linked to an increased risk of tooth decay
- Foods and drinks that are high in sugar and acid can easily damage teeth
- Tooth decay can be prevented with a healthy diet low in sugar, good oral hygiene and regular dental checks