



## **ARE PARENTS TO BLAME CHILDREN'S CARIES? ANALYSIS OF THE APPROACH TO FAMILY HYGIENE**

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**Annotation:** Dental caries in children is often associated with malnutrition, lack of adequate hygiene skills, and negative habits in the family. This article analyzes the direct influence of parents on the spread of caries in children, the family approach to oral hygiene, and the lack of prevention on a scientific basis. The study reveals the inextricable link between the family hygiene model and child health.

**Keywords:** childhood caries, oral hygiene, parental responsibility, family hygiene, sweet consumption, medical culture, early treatment

Dental caries is one of the most common chronic non-communicable diseases among children. According to WHO, 60-90% of school-age children have caries. However, the main factor behind these figures is not the child himself, but the behavior and hygiene culture of the parents. In most cases:

The child does not know the rules of tooth brushing or their implementation is not monitored;

The child is given too many sweets and carbonated drinks;

Parents ignore toothache or caries;

The family visits the dentist only when there is pain.

Therefore, childhood caries is not only a pediatric problem, but also a socio-medical issue related to the family environment and the quality of upbringing.

The study was conducted on the following grounds:

A questionnaire was conducted among 150 children aged 5–12 years and their parents in 2020–2024;

The severity of caries was assessed based on the results of a dental examination;

Parents' attitude to hygiene, eating habits, and frequency of visits to the doctor were analyzed;

A theoretical analysis was conducted based on scientific articles and WHO documents.

**Results**

1. Level of parental awareness:

o72% of respondents knew that their child had caries, but only 35% had undergone a medical examination.

o43% of parents admitted that they did not regularly monitor the child's tooth brushing routine.

2. Eating habits:

o6 out of 10 children eat sweets every day.

o40% of children go to bed without brushing their teeth.

o3. Use of hygiene products:

o28% of children use the wrong toothpaste (fluoride-free or adult).o17% of children brush their teeth 1-2 times a week, which increases the risk of caries by 3 times.

The results show that the main cause of dental caries in children is not the child's age or personal hygiene, but the indifference, lack of knowledge or bad habits of parents. If there is little attention to oral hygiene in the family, the child also adopts these habits. This is based on the principle of "modeling behavior" - that is, the child copies the behavior from the parents.

In addition, most parents consider visiting the dentist to be necessary only when there is pain. This misses the opportunity to timely detect and treat caries at an early stage.

Therefore, dental preventive programs should be carried out not only with children, but also with their parents. It is the family approach that remains the most effective strategy for maintaining children's health.

Childhood caries is the result of a negative approach of parents and gaps in the hygiene culture. Good intentions, but incorrect practice, in many cases, seriously harm the child's dental health. Prevention is not about teaching how to brush your teeth, but about forming health values in the family.

### **Recommendations:**

- Organize oral hygiene lectures for parents in every school and kindergarten;

- Distribute annual reminders (calendars, booklets) to parents on monitoring children's teeth;

- Introduce a system of "family hygiene mentors" among medical workers and educators.

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