

Research Shows Over 50% Of British Parents Do Not Take Their Children To The Dentist Often Enough

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While oral care remains an important issue, new research from Mintel reveals some worrying gaps in oral hygiene care trends among British parents. Indeed, Mintel's research finds just half (53%) of Britain's parents (with children aged 0-12 years) claim to take their children to visit the dentist regularly and only 57% always ensure their children have brushed their teeth properly.

Today, around one in five (17%) parents agree that using mouthwash is necessary for children aged six and over and one in ten (12%) parents agree that flossing is necessary for children aged six and over. And when it comes to babies, just a quarter (25%) of parents believe it is important to take a baby to the dentist as soon as they develop their first baby tooth. Furthermore, a worrying one in ten (7%) parents believe baby teeth do not need too much attention as they fall out anyway and around one in five (18%) parents admit they are not confident enough to protect their children's oral health.

Roshida Khanom, Senior Personal Care Analyst at Mintel, said:

“With almost half of parents not taking their children to visit the dentist regularly, our research reveals a distinct lack of awareness on what their children's oral care regime should look like. What is more, only a quarter of parents agree that it is important to visit the dentist as soon as babies develop their first tooth, despite NHS recommendations to take children to the dentist from as young an age as possible – and at least once by the time they are two. It's likely that parents think of oral care to be limited to toothbrush and toothpaste when it comes to their children, and so don't feel the need to take their child to the dentist regularly or see the need for products beyond basics such as toothpaste, despite the increase in products designed for this age group.”

Overall, 2013 was a landmark year for the oral care sector, as sales of mouthwash, toothbrushes and toothpaste, dental accessories and denture products hit the £1 billion mark. Indeed, sales of oral care products have seen strong growth in the last two years, growing 4% annually in both 2012 and 2013. What is more, the market is forecast to grow by as much as 22% in the next five years to reach an impressive £1.23 billion by 2018.

Within the sector, mouthwash has seen the greatest growth, sales rising a refreshing 6% between 2012 and 2013 to reach £197 million – accounting for 19% of category sales. The rise in value has been driven by price rises, with the price per unit of mouthwash rising by as much as 9% in 2013. Meanwhile, toothbrushes and toothpaste (£713 million) make up 70% of sector sales and dental accessories and dental products make up the remaining 10% of sales at a value of £103 million in 2013.

“The oral care category has enjoyed strong growth in 2012 and 2013, primarily driven by the mouthwash and denture products and dental accessories segments. Market growth in value of the oral health category, and in particular the launch of more premium products, suggest that consumers are willing to pay more for results that deliver against their concerns. The market has also been driven by a high level of brand loyalty in the category's core segments.” Roshida continues.

Finally, Mintel's research highlights the nation's quest for ever whiter teeth. Indeed, as many as three in ten (30%) Brits, use a whitening toothpaste every day and over half (55%) of Brits have used a whitening toothpaste in the past three months. Meanwhile, 14% of Brits have used whitening strips and kits in the past month.

When it comes to whiter teeth, younger people show higher usage of whitening toothpaste, with 35% of 16-24s using whitening toothpaste on a daily basis compared with 27% of 45-54s. Usage of whitening strips is also higher amongst young people; with 17% of 16-24s and 20% of 25-34s using whitening strips and kits on a weekly basis. Men are also more likely to use whitening strips and kits than women (12% use them weekly compared with 7% of women). Whitening is also important to single people, who show higher usage of whitening toothpaste than those who are married (51% using whitening toothpaste at least once a week compared with 45% of married people).

“Just like a growing number of celebrities, many Brits are striving to have a perfect set of teeth. Consumer willingness to spend more on instant benefits, such as teeth whitening, reflects the continued trend of interest in cosmetic benefits. And high usage of whitening toothpaste among the young suggests that some young people may be using whitening toothpastes as a weekly cosmetic top-up.” Roshida concludes.