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# Dental health

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## More than 6.6 million rural children under 12 years of age have experienced tooth decay, but most have not been treated.

Tooth decay among many children results from eating snacks and drinks that contain high amounts of sugar. Untimely tooth loss also results from not learning proper tooth brushing techniques when young.

As a general rule, all 20 primary or milk teeth will have developed by the time the child is three years old. However, by this stage, two out of three children will already have developed tooth decay, afflicting 3 to 4 teeth on average. Furthermore, compared to children in Bangkok, rural children are twice as likely to have tooth decay, 70% of which is not treated. In contrast, only 36% of children in Bangkok remain untreated.

The Dental Health Division, Department of Health, reports that since 2002, the overall number of children with tooth decay had decreased in all major regions of the country except the Southern region, where it has stabilized at 72.5%. The latest survey, in 2004, revealed that three-year-olds in Nakhon Pathom province had the least tooth decay. The highest number of children with tooth decay was found in the Southern-most provinces.

By the age of five or six, when children start to go to school, their milk teeth will have grown fully. Two out of three children of this age have already experienced tooth decay. In rural areas, the figure is five out of six. At age twelve, by which time 28 permanent teeth have developed, the number of rural children with tooth decay is similar to that for urban children, with an average of 1 to 2 decayed teeth per child. Only half of these cases are treated.

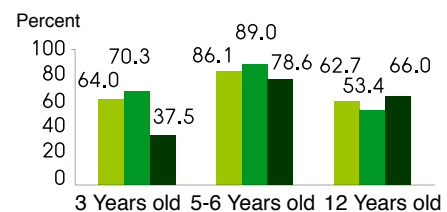
Every year, approximately 100,000 children develop new tooth decay. Major causes are improper eating behavior and lack of dental services for children, especially in rural areas. The influence of advertisements for sugary snacks and all forms of sugar supplements contribute to the problem. At present, elementary kids spend 13 baht per day on buying snacks and 19 baht per day during holidays. In other words, 6.7 million children aged 6-12 spend up to 40 billion baht per year on these harmful snacks.



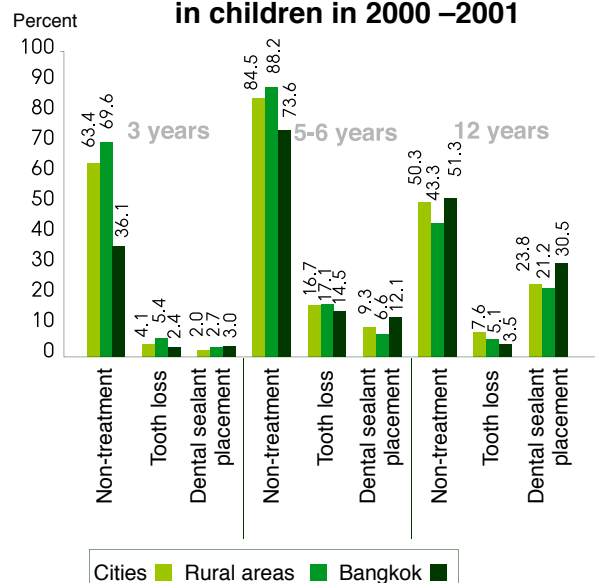
Many children develop cavities and lose teeth. Bad eating behavior and non-treatment of decayed teeth are to blame.



**Tooth decay in children in 2000 –2001**



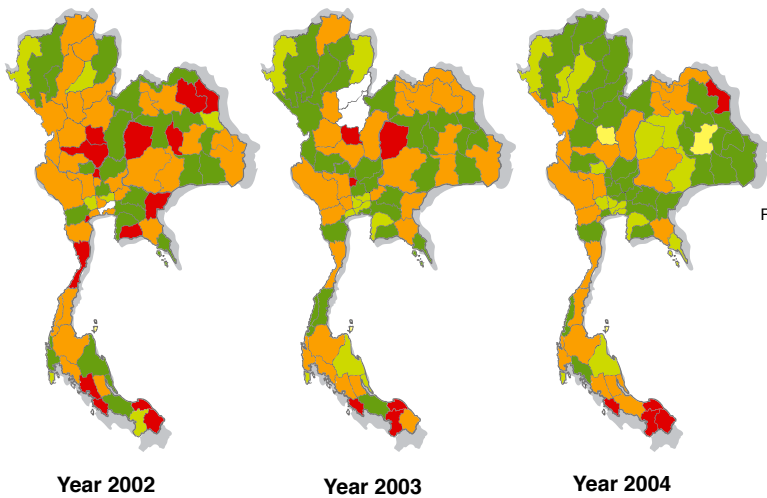
**Treated cases of tooth decay in children in 2000 –2001**



Source: The 5<sup>th</sup> National Oral Health Survey, Year 2000 - 2001, the Dental Health Division, Department of Health.

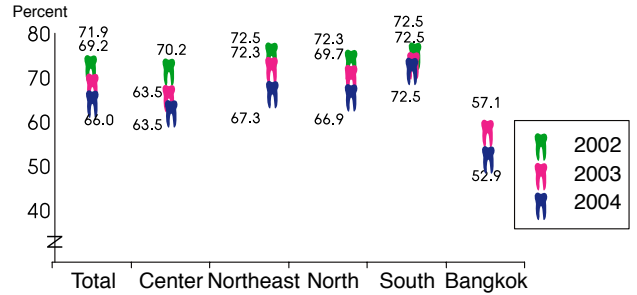


### Children under three years old with tooth decay



- Less than 60%
- > 60 – 70%
- > 70 – 80%
- More than 80%
- Survey not conducted

### Tooth decay in children under 3 years old



Source: The 2004 Report on the Situation of Children Aged 3 Years Old with Non-Decayed Teeth, Dental Health Division, Department of Health

### Tooth decay in children aged 5-6 years old

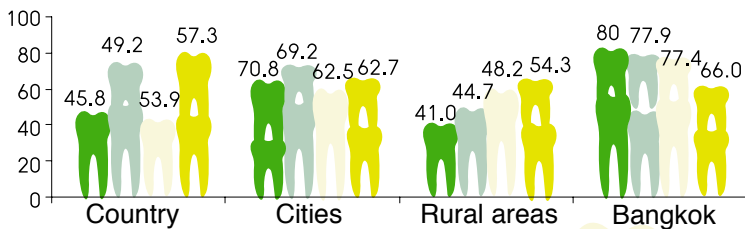


### Average number of decayed tooth (per child)

Age	1984	1989	1994	2000-2001
3 years	-	4	3.4	3.6
6 years	4.9	5.6	5.7	6.0
12 years	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6

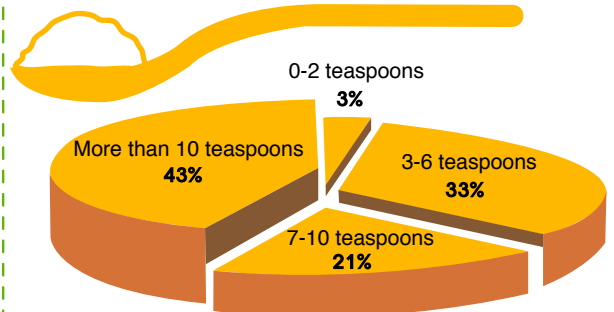
Source: The National Oral Health Survey No. 2,3,4 and 5, The Dental Health Division, Department of Health.

### Tooth decay in children aged 12 years old



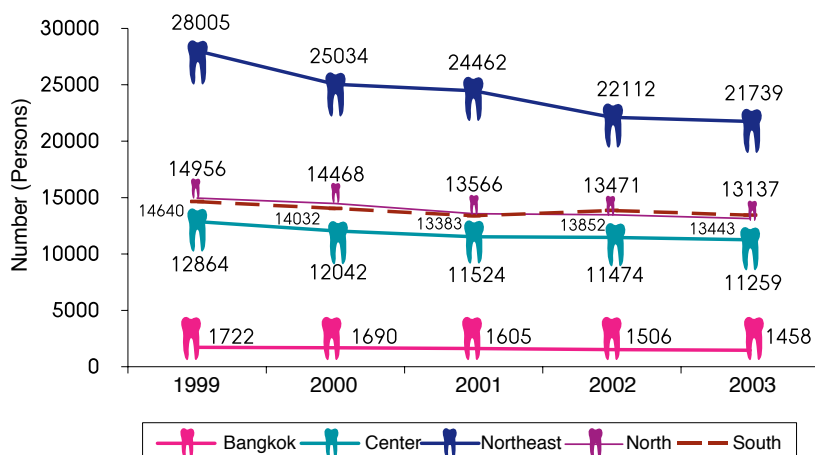
Source: The 5<sup>th</sup> National Oral Health Survey, Year 2000 - 2001, Dental Health Division, Department of Health.

### Amount of sugar consumption by children aged 3-5 years



Source: Jantana Augchusak et al., 2004

### Number of populations per a dentist



Source: Custom Tabulations from the Annual Report of Public Health Personal in 1999 - 2003 by the Department of Health, Thai Population Projection in 2000 - 2025, and Population Estimation in 1990 - 2020

### Dental treatment

Age group	Percent
0-4	7.1
5-9	8.9
10-14	6.3
15-19	11.0
20-29	20.5
30-39	17.5
40-49	13.3
50-59	7.6
60+	7.7
Total	100

Source: Study on the oral health service management situation on universal health insurance, 2002