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Ankeny kids brush up on dental health

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Third-graders at Northwest Elementary School learned how to keep their teeth and gums healthy during a recent visit from the School Smile Squad.

"We're learning about how to keep teeth healthy," said Carter Lowe, 9, of Ankeny. "I learned that milk has sugar and I didn't know that."

School Smile Squad is a program sponsored by the Des Moines Health Center. Sue Hyland, of the health center, said the program is designed to prevent poor dental health habits and to educate kids on how to keep their teeth and gums healthy.

Hyland also said the School Smile Squad has a sealant program with a mobile dental clinic.

The squad has a goal to make sure 70 percent of third-graders have sealants on their teeth. Hyland said that currently only about 30 percent to 40 percent of students have sealants.

Hyland taught students at Northwest, 1202 W. First St. in Ankeny, how to maintain healthy dental habits - including brushing twice a day, flossing and eating sugary foods with meals to allow saliva to break down acids and sugars. Hyland also inspected the kids' teeth to give them suggestions about how to better take care of their teeth.

ZOOM



Emily Curtis

Hyland displays a model of an adult mouth to third-graders at Northwest Elementary School.

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