Black and Hispanic Kids at Greatest Risk for Cavities

For minority children, the negative consequences of poor oral health are extensive.

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Although the percentage of American kids with cavities has declined overall, recent findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveal that minority children still have more cavities, including untreated ones, reports CNN.

A cavity occurs when the hard outer layer of a tooth, or enamel, is destroyed, explains the American Dental Association. The condition is the most common chronic disease among youth ages 6 to 19 and can cause pain and infection if untreated.

The CDC confirmed that cavities in young folks fell from 50 percent in 2012 to nearly 43 percent in 2016. However, researchers noted that Hispanic and Black children have the most cavities as well as untreated cavities. Hispanic children had the most cavities (52 percent) followed by African American kids (44.3 percent). Black youth were also more likely to have untreated cavities (17.1 percent), and Latino children were not far behind (13.5 percent).

Scientists cited socioeconomic status, education level and health care access as some reasons why minorities seem to be at greater risk for this oral problem. According to the study results, as family income levels increased, the prevalence of total and untreated cavities decreased.

Some key ways to address this issue, experts said, include offering minority communities access to oral health care, raising people's awareness about the importance of oral health and connect families to dental clinics they can readily access.

In addition, the CDC suggests that parents take kids to visit a dentist for their first checkup by age 1 and use fluoride to protect children's teeth.

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