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PRESS RELEASE

DENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

In the beginning of the new year in 1969 the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Ministry of Education will launch a dental health campaign to instruct school children in primary I to III classes in tooth brushing. This is intended to form part of the child's training in school. In instituting such instruction in schools, Singapore will be the first country in this region to do so on a comprehensive scale.

2. The condition of the teeth of our population is poor. This is evident in the deplorable state of the teeth of National Servicemen when examined on entry into the Service. How severe this is will be determined by the Dental Health Survey which is to be conducted by the Dental Department with the co-operation of the University Dental Department and advised by the World Health Organisation. It is estimated that half the population do not brush their teeth regularly and half of the school children do not possess toothbrushes and those who do, do not brush their teeth properly or regularly. As a result, the full benefit of fluoridation of the water as a protective measure against tooth decay has not been fully effective.

3. A simple, inexpensive and yet effective way to improve dental health is to inculcate the habit of regular and proper brushing of teeth. Tooth brushing by school children is an initial step to training them in this important aspect of dental hygiene and to acquire the habit of brushing their teeth regularly.

4. As there are about 600 primary schools with over 350,000 primary school children, preparations have been made to obtain adequate supplies of toothbrushes of an approved standard design. School teachers have been trained by the Dental Health Education Unit of the Ministry of Health in the correct tooth brushing techniques so that they can teach these to the school children.

5. Every primary school child will be supplied with a toothbrush and a plastic mug with a cover at cost (approximately 25 cents for both).

6. The scheme of instruction was tested out as a pilot project in 10 primary schools. Experience from the pilot project from these schools indicates that the scheme can be successfully extended to other primary schools.

Ministry of Education/Ministry of Health.

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