

Norwegian Tooth Bank seeks milk teeth from 100,000 children

31 March 2008

The Norwegian Tooth Bank is requesting milk teeth from 100 000 children in Norway and could become the biggest tooth bank in the world. Milk teeth can give unique information about environmental influences and nutrition in the foetus and in early childhood. The Tooth Bank is a sub-project in the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study (MoBa), and is a collaborative project between the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and the University of Bergen.

Milk teeth can give invaluable information about environmental factors and nutrition in the foetal stage and in early childhood. MoBa is collecting large amounts of information about each mother's diet and environment through pregnancy with the use of questionnaires, plus blood and urine samples from both parents. The children are followed as they grow up with a series of questionnaires. This information, together with the milk teeth, will give knowledge about the effect environmental pollutants have on children's health.

Parents who are taking part in MoBa receive an invitation to the Tooth Bank when children are 6 years and 9 months.

Milk teeth develop in the foetus and in early childhood. Substances that are built into tooth tissue during tooth development will mostly remain there. Milk teeth therefore act as a "black-box" recording of what the mother and child have been exposed to. These teeth have almost unlimited durability if they are stored dry, so that the tooth's value will remain for future research.

The milk teeth will be kept in envelopes in secure storage boxes at the University of Bergen. They will be anonymous, only identified by a bar code.

Source: Norwegian Institute of Public Health

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