

# Milton children have healthiest teeth in Halton

*Health officials puzzled as usually high amounts of tooth decay found*

By **Melanie Hennessey**  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

For the first time in many years, the Halton Region Health Department has found that Milton children have the best teeth in the region.

A survey presented to the Region's health and social services committee Tuesday showed that Milton elementary school-aged children have the lowest prevalence of tooth decay out of the four local municipalities.

This is a far cry from past survey results, which routinely revealed that local kids had the highest amounts of tooth decay — something the health department said could've been closely linked to the lack of fluoride in 'old' Milton's water supply. Those in the new areas of town are provided with fluoridated water from the Big Pipe.

The change has Region officials scratching their heads.

"We don't have a good explanation for why the results dropped so dramatically," said Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal. "It's good news though."

He did point out that with the growth in Milton, at least half of the town or more now has a fluoridated water supply.

He added the health department will follow up on the issue in future surveys to see if there's a trend.

A report to the committee outlined the 2005-2007 dental survey results from 2,547 students — aged five, seven, nine and 13 — at randomly-selected elementary schools throughout the region.

The results show that the prevalence of dental decay went down in all local municipalities, with the exception of Halton Hills, which saw a slight increase.

The dental decay numbers from the current survey are as follows:

- Five-year-olds — Milton, 15.8 per cent; Burlington, 30.3 per cent; Oakville, 25.6 per cent; Halton Hills, 36.5 per cent
- Seven-year-olds — Milton, 36.4 per cent; Burlington, 43.2 per cent; Oakville, 47.7 per cent; Halton Hills, 56.1 per cent

## Luckily, no one hurt

• from FIRE on page A1

ly a fire can advance. "Anything can happen at any time."

Halton Regional Police Det. Sgt. Murray Drinkwalter concurred the situation could've turned out much differently. "We're lucky someone wasn't hurt badly," he said.

Since the cause of the fire is known, neither the Ontario Ministry of Labour nor the Office of the Fire Marshal is investigating. A section of Main Street was closed to traffic, but re-opened a couple of hours later.

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• Nine-year-olds — Milton, 36.2 per cent per cent; Burlington, 40.7 per cent; Oakville, 56.3 per cent; Halton Hills, 65.5 per cent

• 13-year-olds — Milton, 12.6 per cent; Burlington, 27.4 per cent; Oakville, 25.4 per cent; Halton Hills, 51.5 per cent.

Milton students were also found to have the lowest number of teeth affected by dental decay.

Nine and 13-year-olds throughout Halton had more occurrences of gingivitis than the younger students.

The older pupils also had a higher prevalence of dental fluorosis, or patchy white flecks on the tooth's surface caused by excessive fluoride intake.

Water fluoridation has long been a contentious issue in

old Milton. A referendum was held in the early '70s on the issue and about 70 or 80 per cent of Milton residents turned fluoridation down.

The debate has resurfaced over the years, with local residents making arguments both for and against fluoride.

Dr. Nosal has recommended in the past that Milton's water supply be fluoridated, but politicians have maintained the status quo.

Milton Councillor Colin Best — who sits on the health and social services committee — said while he doesn't want to get into the fluoride debate, he noted it's interesting that Halton Hills' dental decay numbers went up, even though the neighbouring municipality has had fluoride in its water for decades.

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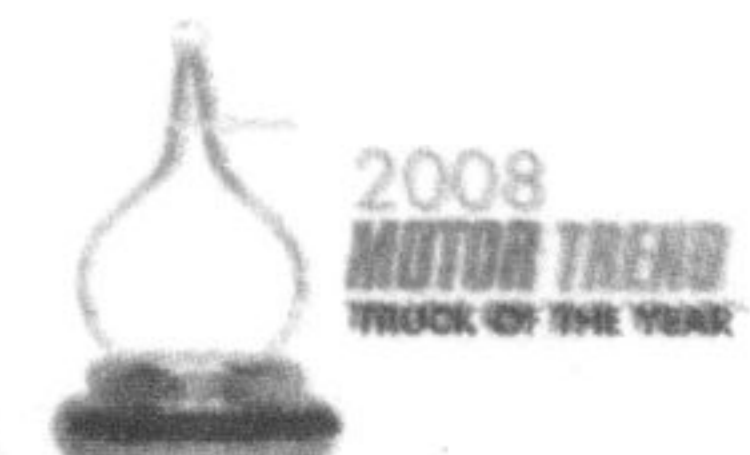
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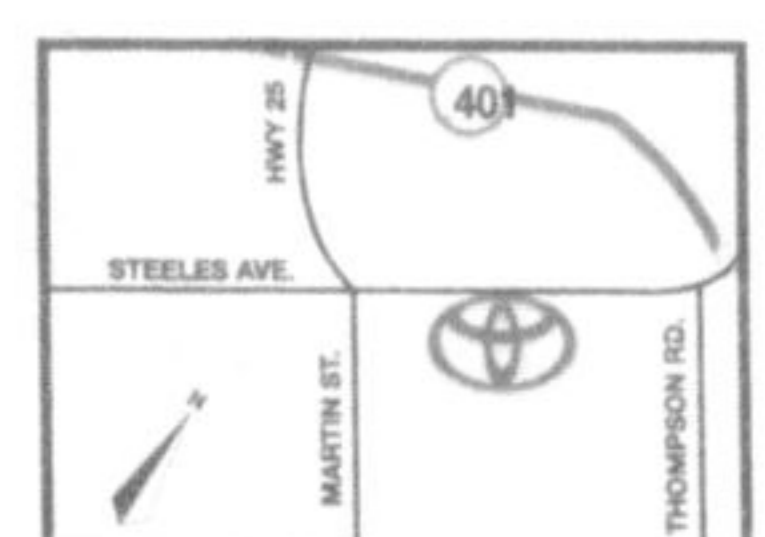
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