

AROUND 50,000 AUSSIE CHILDREN LIVE WITH TOOTH DECAY AND ORAL DISEASE, AND ARE ON LONG WAITING LISTS FOR DENTAL TREATMENT. SO WOMAN'S DAY IS JOINING FORCES WITH COLGATE AND THE DENTAL FOUNDATION TO HELP OUR KIDS SMILE AGAIN



BRIGHT SMILE

for Aussie

▶▶ Brothers Caleb, 10, and Jerson, 13, finally have their smiles back.



Like most children, brothers Jerson and Caleb are a little scared of a visit to the dentist. But they both know that the alternative can be much more frightening.

"Last year my gums got infected and I had to have an operation at the Westmead Children's Hospital in Sydney," says Jerson, 13, who's joined by younger brother Caleb, 10, and dad Frankie. "The doctors had to take out five of my teeth."

Jerson was halfway through dental treatment when his parents ran out of money to attend the clinic where he was being treated. Put on a public health waiting list, Jerson's dental problems developed into a serious infection and he ended up losing teeth.

Sadly and surprisingly, it's

a common story that affects thousands of Australian kids.

When Jon Dee, patron of the National Dental Foundation (NDF), heard about friends remortgaging their home in order to pay for their four-year-old's dental treatment, he did some research and was shocked at the number of children languishing on lengthy waiting lists.

After getting crucial support and sponsorship from Colgate, Jon got to work with the NDF and *Woman's Day* to launch the Bright Smiles campaign.

DENTISTS HELP OUT

Contacting more than 8500 dental surgeries across the country, Colgate is appealing to dentists to donate their services to help kids in need. The aim is to treat hundreds of children with



▷▷ NDF patron Jon Dee (left) and Sydney dentist Nick Hocking are helping to put kids like Caleb and Jerson out of their dental agony with the Bright Smiles campaign.

ES kids

tooth decay and gum disease in the coming months.

First on board is Nick Hocking from Dental Care Network in Sydney, who is generously treating Jerson and his brother for free.

"Like a lot of dentists, I am passionate about the state of dental care in Australia," Nick explains. "A lot of dentists do things quietly – treating needy patients for free – but this campaign is great because it makes it more overt."

Nick is well aware of the terrible state of some children's teeth. "My staff and I went to a school in Sydney to do a free consultation," he says. "We examined 200 children aged 5-12 and more than 20 kids had large holes in their teeth.

"When we wrote a note to the parents asking them if they were



aware of the holes, it was shocking how many times the parents knew but couldn't afford to do anything about it. That was a real eye-opener."

WORST CASES

Jon Dee and the teams for the NDF and Colgate are hard at work to make sure the neediest children on official waiting lists get help quickly.

"We'll be working with charities such as The Salvation Army and others to identify families and kids in need," Jon says. "We're also appealing to *Woman's Day* readers to

nominate a child they know on a waiting list who needs help now.

"When you fix a child's teeth it gives them confidence from an early age – and if their family is doing it tough, this tells them that society cares about them."

BY MONIQUE BUTTERWORTH

▷▷ For more information on the Bright Smiles campaign, or for dentists wanting to help, go to www.brightsmiles.net.au Go to www.womansday.ninemsn.com.au for weekly updates and info on keeping kids' teeth healthy.

HOW TO HELP A CHILD IN NEED

▷▷ If you know of a child aged 16 or under who's on a waiting list for dental treatment, write to *Woman's Day* Bright Smiles, GPO Box 5245, Sydney, NSW, 2000. Tell us what treatment the child needs, how long they've been waiting, which hospital they're registered with – and include your own contact details so we can get in touch. If the child or family is receiving help from a registered charity such as The Salvation Army, please include that information. Please also include a picture of the child.

A panel of judges will decide on a shortlist of 100 people. Each finalist will receive a dental kit including Colgate Total 45g Toothpaste, Colgate 360 Degree Toothbrush, Plax 50ml and Floss 3 yard. Their entries will be passed on to Colgate and the NDF, who

will select five entries for dental treatment from volunteer dentists. You can also email entries to womansdaybrightsmiles@acpmagazines.com.au Entries close on August 11, 2008. For full terms and conditions of entry, please go to www.womansdaypromotion.magshop.com.au. See contents page for location of ACP's privacy notice.

'PARENTS KNOW ABOUT THE HOLES BUT CAN'T AFFORD TO FIX THEM'

