



# Raisin awareness - Join the campaign!



Dental nurse **Jo Dawson** is running a campaign to eliminate dried fruit from the free fruit snack selection at primary schools. In this article, she explains how your dental practice can join in and support the campaign.

**A**s promised in the March issue of *BDJ Team* (<https://go.nature.com/3a3WKi4>), here are the details of what you need to know and how your practice can get involved in Raisin Awareness.

Over 2 million children, in 16,600 primary schools in England, are given raisins and

sultanas as a snack six times a year, increasing their risk of tooth decay. Furthermore, because of it, in many schools dried fruit and other cariogenic snacks can be brought in from home every day. As you are well aware, this goes against the advice which we as dental professionals give out, based on the Department of Health's document *Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention*.

### Aims of the Raisin Awareness campaign

- To end dried and processed fruit snacks in primary schools
- To improve the oral health of children in primary schools
- To link dental practices with primary schools
- To supply regular oral health education literature to all pupils.

By linking dental practices with primary schools, and funding fresh vegetable alternatives to dried fruit on the first day of every half term, Raisin Awareness opens up the way for each school to change their snack policy to exclude these. Attempting to reduce health-related inequalities could be achieved by targeting schools in order on the index of multiple deprivation.



- Caring about your local community
- Interested in making a difference to children's oral health nationally
- Ready to see the benefits from offering staff an opportunity to expand and develop their role
- Looking to invest in a different type of marketing?

If so, you may wish to join the campaign, whether you have staff with children attending a local primary school, or no connection to a primary school at all. To register your interest, visit: <https://smilerevolutiongrowthhub.com/who-we-work-with/>.

the longer term, this will forge improved pathways to accessing dental care using the linked networks developed in the expansion of the Raisin Awareness campaign.

### Changing government policy

Raisin Awareness doesn't want dental practices to take over from the government to pay for 'first day veg' indefinitely. We are continually working with our partners to change government policy, lobbying the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to stop the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme (SFVS) giving out dried fruit as snacks.

*'Given the great success of this first pilot, Raisin Awareness wants to give more dental practices the opportunity to join in. Register your interest in being involved in the campaign!'*

As an extra benefit to joining in with the Raisin Awareness campaign - as well as getting great local publicity and the satisfaction and feel good factor of being involved - your practice logo and contact details will appear on the frequent oral health education (OHE) handouts.

### Oral health education

The second part of Raisin Awareness is delivering regular OHE literature in a fun way to hundreds of families in each school. As demonstrated in the best practice examples of other OHE projects, realising the importance of establishing follow-up to the initial intervention for maximum impact.

Practices who are involved have their contact details distributed into the homes of the whole school and will receive positive publicity within the local community, for a very small cost. Both printed activity sheets and online videos, with dental practice logos and contact details, are sent home from school six times a year (3 x paper, 3 x email). In this way dental messages can reach many families, reinforcing advice given in surgery, but also getting to those who might not regularly attend a dental practice. In

### National support

National support for the Raisin Awareness campaign is growing. I would like to thank everyone who has supported the campaign so far and give a mention to Victoria Wilson at Smile Revolution for use of a website page and to Philips for sponsoring my place on the Oral Health Promotion Project course.

Amongst the dental community we now have support from the BDA, the OHF, BSPD, BADN, BSDHT and BADT.

We are also working with Sustain and a group of interested parties (including Soil Association, School Food Matters, BiteBack2030, Chefs in Schools) to expand and improve the SFVS for everyone.

These are exciting times for my Raisin Awareness campaign. Next month I hope to share details of a social media campaign that I am busy planning.

To register your interest in being involved with the Raisin Awareness campaign, visit: <https://smilerevolutiongrowthhub.com/who-we-work-with/>.

In a first approach, Raisin Awareness successfully implemented a pilot in one school with one dental practice. Devonshire House Dental Practice in Cambridge has been sponsoring the raisin swap in a local primary school for 164 children. Local vegetable delivery was sourced, and when the raisin swap was in place, the governors were subsequently able to change the whole school snack policy to make it more tooth-friendly.

Given the great success of this first pilot, Raisin Awareness wants to give more dental practices the opportunity to join in.

### Would you like to get involved?

Right now the campaign hopes to expand nationwide to practices across the country.

Is your practice:

- Family friendly
- With a culture which promotes prevention

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