

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Alliance for a Cavity Free Future challenges Aussies to choose water over alternative drinks**

#### ***Study: Sugary drinks found to be a leading cause of dental decay in Australia***

**SYDNEY, Australia- 27 September 2017** – Australians are being urged to raise a glass of water to a cavity free future and join the fight against tooth decay by choosing water over alternative drinks for a week on World Cavity Free Future Day (WCFFD) commencing Saturday, 14 October.

On this day, Australians are encouraged to engage in conversations about the prevention of dental decay and share their progress on the challenge with other participants on Facebook and Instagram using the hashtag #ChooseWater. The duration of the challenge coincides with National Water Week taking place from Oct 15 – 21, 2017.

As part of the campaign, a number of well-known Australian personalities including [Rebecca Gawthorne](#), [Nadia Felsch](#), [Rachel Scoular](#) amongst others have come on-board as Water Warriors to promote the #ChooseWater challenge through their social media channels.

The WCFFD campaign spearheaded by the Alliance for a Cavity Free Future (ACFF) in partnership with Colgate and the Australian Dental Association (ADA) has been developed with the collective aim of eradicating cavities in children born in 2026 and beyond.

“Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood<sup>1</sup> and can have a profound impact on a child's health and quality of life. Improvement in the prevention of dental decay calls for increased collaboration between communities to work together to address the disease. Together we can educate the public and challenge leaders in dentistry and public health to take action,” said Dr Rachel Martin, Specialist in Public Health Dentistry and representative of the Alliance for a Cavity Free Future.

The campaign inspired by results from the National Child Oral Health Study revealed that 27% of children aged 5-10 years had untreated tooth decay<sup>2</sup>. In addition, a recent Colgate Cavity Report found teenage males consume the highest average daily sugar intake at 92g, the equivalent to 18 teaspoons per day<sup>3</sup>.

Despite these concerns regarding the oral health of everyday Australians, awareness of the key causes of tooth decay remains strong with 99% of Australian parents agreeing the consumption of sugary food and drinks causes cavities in teeth.

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<sup>1</sup> National Child Oral Health Study 2012-2014 p86

<sup>2</sup> National Child Oral Health Study 2012-2014 p87

<sup>3</sup> The Colgate Cavity Report 2017

The same Colgate study shows that currently a third of all Australians are consuming soft-drinks more than once a week with each serving containing 1.6 times the recommended daily intake of sugar.

In terms of active prevention, 87 per cent of parents have stated that brushing teeth twice a day is the most effective oral care tactic. Other popular prevention strategies include limiting consumption of sugary foods and drinks (73%) and drinking fluoridated water (33%).

According to Dr Susan Cartwright, Scientific Affairs Manager at Colgate Oral Care, “choosing water over other sugary drinks is a simple and effective way to prevent tooth decay”.

“Soft drinks contain excess calories and added sugars. By contrast, water is a low cost, calorie-free drink that helps to prevent tooth decay and other serious health concerns. Adults and dental professionals can encourage children by being role models and drinking water first. Making oral health an entertaining and shared experience is a great way to instil positive oral health behaviours in young children and set them up for a healthy adulthood,” said Dr Cartwright.

High sugar consumption is linked not just to poor oral health but also a number of general health issues for children such as obesity and diabetes.

“The consumption of free sugars is the most significant behavioural risk factor for tooth decay, which is the most preventable chronic disease in Australia. The ADA is proud to support this initiative and encourages all Australians to choose water. Making water your drink of choice and regularly sipping it throughout the day, including with and right after meals, makes a real difference to the health of your teeth,” said Dr Hugo Sachs, ADA President.

On 14 October, the Australian ACFF Chapter and supporters will hold outreach events, educational drives, and many more activities to encourage Australians to #ChooseWater and protect their oral health.

Australians can demonstrate their commitment to choosing water by using the #ChooseWater hashtag on social media.

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**About The Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future:**

The Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (ACFF) is a worldwide group of experts who have joined together to promote integrated clinical and public health action in order to stop dental caries (tooth decay) initiation and progression in order to move towards a Cavity-Free Future for all age groups. Overall, the group believes that global collaborative action is needed to challenge global leaders and other regional and local stakeholders to learn about the importance of dental caries as a disease continuum and to participate in action toward the delivery of comprehensive caries prevention and

management that can positively influence the continuing problem of dental caries. By working together on a global, regional and local level, the ACFF challenges these stakeholders to stop dental caries NOW for the opportunity to have a Cavity-Free Future.

### **About Colgate-Palmolive**

Colgate-Palmolive is a wholly owned subsidiary of the New York Stock Exchange listed Colgate-Palmolive Company. It is a leading global consumer products company specialising in oral health care, personal and household care, fabric care and pet nutrition. Colgate-Palmolive's products are sold over 200 countries and include internationally recognised brands such as Colgate, Palmolive, and Ajax.

### **About ADA**

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) is the peak national professional body representing Australia's 15,000 registered dentists, as well as dental students. The ADA is a not-for-profit professional membership organisation that encourages the improvement of the oral and general health of the public and works to advance and promote the ethics, art and science of dentistry.