

TheBostonChannel.com



Dentist Offers Kits To Protect Kids

Tooth Impressions Help Provide Information

posted: 2:41 p.m. EDT June 12, 2003
updated: 5:44 p.m. EDT June 12, 2003

Imprints Can
BeValuable Tool
For more information,
call: (617) *437-1060*

BOSTON -- In the wake of the identification of Molly Bish's remains this week, a Boston dentist is offering a service to parents -- imprints of their child's teeth that can be a valuable tool in the event of the unthinkable.

NewsCenter 5's Liz Brunner reported that Mark McGonagle, 4, took a trip to the dentist, but the visit wasn't about cleaning and flossing. It was about safety. "I can't even imagine what the Bishes are going through. As a parent, it's terrible. My team decided we wanted to do something for the families of Boston, an identifier for these kids that I think is essential for everyone to have, but will hopefully, never get used," Dr. Stephen Spitz said.

In just a few minutes, Mark's teeth were imprinted on a piece of thermoplastic, providing an instant identifier much like a fingerprint, only more durable.

"All teeth have identifying marks on them so no two are ever alike. So we can have an impression for these tooth prints of a child and actually match that up with them for years to come," Spitz said. The impression also provides other critical information. The saliva that is captured gives an instant DNA sample and a permanent scent. "A dog can actually sniff that bite wafer and go and search for a child," Spitz said. Ideally, Spitz said that imprints should be taken at 3, then again at age 7 after the first permanent molars are in, and then at age 12 when permanent teeth have settled. Parents are finding the idea comforting. "It seems like every day I turn on the news or read the paper and there's just another thing happening. So the more we can kind of protect the kids and have the stuff at our fingertips, the better," Mark's father said. The dental impression is easy enough to do in your own home. Spitz is offering the kits in exchange for a \$5 donation to the Boys and Girls Club of Boston. For more information, call (617) 437-1060.

