



PERFECT SMILE

Superior ingredients for healthier teeth and gums, naturally

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Promoting Oral Health and Fighting Gum Disease

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The Perfect Smile Science Advisory Panel is pleased to introduce our bimonthly newsletter. Brief articles will be published concerning oral health and its connection to overall health. We will look at nutrition and lifestyle choices that promote oral health and fight gum disease. The newsletter will contain original

articles summarizing current research, as well as new natural treatments and interventions found in complementary and alternative medicine literature. Feel free to contact us with feedback! You may email the editor at ginny@4thepperfectsmile.com.

Welcome

Oral Health and Nutrition—An Overview

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's report, *Healthy People 2010*, cavities and tooth loss have significantly declined in the U.S. since the early 1970s. However, despite huge advances in oral health care in American over the last 40 years, oral health still remains a high-ranking health concern, especially for certain groups. For example, according to the report, while the number of cavities for children decreased between 1988- 2000, the number of cavities in children aged 2-4 years rose 23%. These numbers are disturbing. More than half of all children have cavities by the second grade, and, by the time students finish high school, about 80% have cavities. In addition, most young adults have some level of gingivitis, which if left untreated, will lead to periodontal disease and tooth loss. Destructive periodontal disease is predicted to grow as the aging U.S. population retains more teeth later in life.

Proper nutrition is as important to oral health as good oral hygiene practices. Most people,

however, don't realize that the concern is not in getting too little food, it is getting too much! In the U.S., oral conditions associated with nutritional deficiencies are rare. However, overnutrition can result in cavities, gingivitis and periodontal disease. Overnutrition is defined as a form of malnutrition in which nutrients are oversupplied. Simply put, overnutrition means getting too much fat, sugar, and salt. The same overconsumption of fat, salt and sugar that has produced an obesity and diabetes epidemic in the U.S. can also decrease oral health status. Popular beverages such as soda, diet and energy drinks and fruit juices are highly acidic, leading to the weakening the enamel on teeth, which in turn leads to cavities and plaque build up. Increased bacteria in plaque leads to gingivitis, periodontal disease and is also linked to numerous other chronic diseases.

In future issues, we'll discuss specific ways your diet can promote optimal oral health.

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Periodontal Disease and Increased Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

There is no doubt in the scientific community that periodontal disease and other chronic diseases are related. In fact, most scientists believe the health of your mouth can be a window to overall health. The increased risk of cardiovascular disease in individuals with gum disease has been recognized for the last 30 years. What has yet to be firmly established is the exact mechanism. A recent review of this topic published in the May 2010 issue of the Annals of Cardiac Anesthesia discusses the two main theories that may explain why researchers have found that people with periodontal disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery dis-

ease as those without periodontal disease.

One theory is that oral bacteria from periodontal disease can enter the blood stream, attaching to fatty plaques in the coronary arteries and contribute to clot formation. The second theory is that the inflammation caused by periodontal disease increases plaque buildup, which may contribute to swelling of the arteries.

While researchers are continuing to study the mechanism that might explain how periodontal disease increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, the consensus is that a healthy mouth and healthy heart go hand in hand.



Oral Health Habits—Women versus Men

Numerous studies have reported that women tend to be busier than men. But results of a recent survey by the American Dental Association suggests that women are not too busy for oral hygiene. The ADA reported that 86% of the women surveyed brush their teeth twice or more a day, while only 66% of men do. Women also change their toothbrush every 3-4 months, while men hang onto theirs for an average of 5 months. The ADA recommends replac-

ing your toothbrush every 3-4 months. Surprisingly, men actually get fewer cavities than women. One theory explaining this contradiction is that men produce more saliva than women and saliva has natural antimicrobial activity.

But when it comes to flossing, neither gender is doing a good job. Only 49% of those surveyed reported flossing their teeth once a day. More disturbing is that 1 out of 3 people surveyed believed a little blood resulting from brushing is

normal. Bleeding gums are a sign of gingivitis or periodontal disease. Men also lose in the statistics for periodontal disease—men are three times more likely to have periodontal disease. But women are not off the hook either. Women are especially susceptible to periodontal disease at certain stages of life due to hormonal changes.

So whether male or female, we all need to improve our oral health habits.



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Q&A

Question: What are the best foods for promoting good oral health?

The best food choices for oral health include:

- **Cheeses, nuts, and milk** provide calcium and phosphorus needed to remineralize teeth.
- **Firm/crunchy fruits**, such as apples and **raw vegetables** dilute the effects of sugars and acids because of their high water content and their ability to stimulate the flow of saliva.
- **Low acid/low sugar beverages** such as water, milk, and unsweetened tea.