

Why Dental Hygiene is Crucial for Overall Health

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The practice of keeping the mouth and teeth clean to prevent dental problems and bad breath is dental hygiene or oral hygiene. The removal of dental plaque and tartar from teeth, which cause cavities, gingivitis and gum disease is known as teeth cleaning. Gum disease causes at least one third of adult tooth loss.

It is always recommended that teeth be cleaned at least twice a year, professionally. Tooth scaling, tooth polishing and debridement if too much tartar is built up, followed by a fluoride treatment all constitute teeth cleaning.

Tartar build up which is one of the root causes of all dental problems can be prevented through good dental hygiene. Oral hygiene involves frequent brushing with a toothbrush and the use of dental floss prevents buildup of plaque producing bacteria. For a good dental hygiene, massaging of gums is essential.

The food and drink that are taken in play the most important role in dental hygiene. Vitamin D strengthens the teeth. Vitamin B that is present in bread and cereals and vitamin c present in fruits and vegetables contribute to healthy gum tissue. Magnesium and zinc present in non-vegetarian foods are also needed for teeth.

The pH level in the mouth should be stabilized to just above 7 to prevent tooth being exposed to acid. Milk and cheese raise the pH value in the mouth and also contain calcium and phosphate essential for remineralisation. Fibre rich foods help to increase the flow of saliva and thus help to prevent cavities.

Starch is not an ideal food for the bacteria because enzymes should convert it in saliva first. Therefore containing foods starch and sugar are commonly associated with dental cavities. Sucrose, glucose and maltose are equally likely to cause cavities. The more frequently sugars are consumed, the greater the time during which the teeth are exposed to low pH levels. So, frequent consumption of food and drinks containing sugar should be discouraged. Even fresh fruit and fruit juices contain sugar and acids that lower the pH level. But carbonic acid found in soda water is not associated with dental cavities. Drinking sugared soft drinks throughout the day raises the risk of dental cavities enormously. Sticky sweet foods may reduce the pH in the mouth.

Therefore it is important to clean the teeth at least twice a day preferably with a fluoride toothpaste using toothbrush, which removes any food sticking to the mouth. The dental plaque coating the teeth surface can be removed by regular brushing and the use of dental floss. Chewing gum may help in cleaning and removing particles between and around the mouth but is not recommended for teeth in poor condition. Smoking and chewing tobacco easily invite multiple dental hazards.

Mouth wash or mouth rinse improves dental hygiene. Dental gums also improve dental health. Retainers can be cleaned in mouthwash or denture cleaning liquid but they should be soaked in cleaning solution or brushed regularly to keep them extremely clean.

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