

Oral health care is vital for seniors

(NC)—Statistics Canada estimates seniors represent the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population, a segment expected to reach 9.2 million by 2041. As more Canadians age, proper preventive healthcare, including oral health, becomes increasingly important. Today, most seniors can expect to keep most, if not all, their natural teeth and this fact makes it especially essential to maintain regular oral hygiene habits and visits to a dental professional.



The Canadian Health Measure Survey says 53% of adults aged 60 to 79 do not have dental insurance, and the lack of coverage is one of the main reasons why Canadians don't see a dental professional. Since older adults have specific dental needs, seniors and their caretakers should be aware of the importance of regular dental care. Bacteria from your mouth can travel and develop into serious infections affecting your overall health, specialists say. Many medications can cause dry mouth, a condition that can contribute to cavities and other oral problems. Seniors also develop more cavities on the roots of their teeth than younger adults.

So whether you're at home or in a long-term care residence, regular treatments by a dental hygienist can help prevent more serious health problems. Together, you can plan a daily oral care routine that will keep your teeth, and you, healthy for life.

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Healthy smiles for babies and toddlers

(NC)— We don't usually associate cavities or gum disease with infants but in fact, oral diseases begin very early. For example, early childhood caries (cavities) is a form of severe tooth decay in the primary (baby) teeth of children from birth to age 3, and it affects more than 10 per cent of preschool-aged children in Canada. Baby's first teeth are crucial to healthy adult teeth, and early childhood cavities can lead to much bigger oral health issues later in life.



Reduce the risk and follow these simple care tips with your little one:

- Be a good role model. Keep your own teeth and gums healthy.
- Wipe baby's mouth and gums with a clean, wet cloth or piece of gauze after feeding.
- Gently clean newly erupted teeth with a small, soft toothbrush.
- Avoid fruit punches and other sweetened drinks in baby bottles, especially before bed.
- Reduce the frequency of nighttime feedings.
- Use only pacifiers with an orthodontic design, and don't dip it in sugary substances.
- Avoid transfer of your saliva onto items used by baby, including bottles, cups, pacifiers. Bacteria spreads.
- Rinse baby's mouth with clear water immediately after any liquid medication is given.
- Check for early warning signs by lifting up baby's top lip. White, chalky teeth or brown or black stained teeth indicate a problem. Contact your dental professional immediately.
- Gradually introduce fresh fruits and vegetables to the diet. These foods, which require chewing, stimulate saliva flow and help to neutralize acids.
- Begin regular dental visits by age one.

More tips and information about oral health care is available online at www.cdha.ca.

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Help older kids brush up on oral health

(NC)— Did you know that an estimated 57% of kids aged 6 to 11 years-old have cavities? That number increases to 59% for teens, but with good oral care, specialists tell us that all children can grow up cavity-free. The habits you help them develop now will last a lifetime, so take a look at these helpful tips:



12-24 Months: Begin regular dental visits by age one. Teach a toddler about dental hygiene when the first teeth come through. Children should get used to holding a toothbrush and should watch others as they brush. Let them practice brushing, but continue brushing their teeth for them. Begin flossing when most of the baby teeth are in.

2-5 Years: Teach young children to use no more than a pea-size amount of toothpaste and make sure they do not eat it. Continue to brush and floss their teeth for them. Avoid sugary sweet treats.

6 + Years: Encourage children to begin flossing. Your dental hygienist will demonstrate proper technique. Continue to supervise brushing and flossing. The surface of your child's permanent molars may be sealed with a light coating to prevent cavities in the deep fissure and grooves of the teeth. Keep a record of any accidents or falls that could affect the placement or condition of permanent teeth.

More information about oral care is available online at www.cdha.ca.

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Dental hygienists celebrate oral health for total health

(NC)—Eating, speaking and smiling are just a few things we do with our mouth that are usually taken for granted. Yet specialists tell us that optimal oral health is the cornerstone of overall health and wellness, and it is the key to a happy and productive life. This fact may be something to think about, especially since we want our smiles to last a lifetime.

The month of April is Oral Health Month and an important part of this celebration is National Dental Hygienists Week, April 8-14. Focusing on the importance of maintaining good oral health practices, this event is sponsored by the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA), a national organization representing the collective voice of more than 24,000 dental hygienists in Canada. The week's theme, "Oral Health for Total Health" reminds all of us that taking care of our mouth, teeth and gums positively impacts on overall health.



CDHA points out that dental hygienists are trained professionals who work with people of all ages, helping them address issues related to oral health care. Whether settling a toddler having their first cleaning, reassuring a child about losing a baby tooth, providing care to adult with periodontal disease or assisting a senior the elderly coping with reduced saliva flow, the dental hygienist's goal is to help people learn and practice good oral hygiene and help build a foundation for a healthy, happy smile for life.

If you would like to participate, watch for oral health promotions and events in your community throughout the month of April. More information about good oral health practices, including regular news, updates, articles and resources, is available online at www.cdha.ca. On Twitter, follow @theCDHA. On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/theCDHA>.

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Dental hygienists are your partners in oral and overall health

(NC)—Self-confidence, self-image, self-esteem—so much is wrapped up in the appearance and condition of our teeth, our mouths and our smiles. But did you know that hidden problems with your overall health can often be detected first in your mouth? Research shows there is a direct link between oral health and your overall health and well-being. In fact, periodontal disease, a disease of the gums and supporting bone, has been linked to a number of serious illnesses including lung disease, diabetes and heart disease.

Dental hygienists are a solution and a partner, specialists in this field say. Whether working in a dental office, a clinic, a hospital, a retirement home or in the community, a dental hygienist is a licensed oral health-care professional who is there every step of the way to help ensure your good oral and overall health.

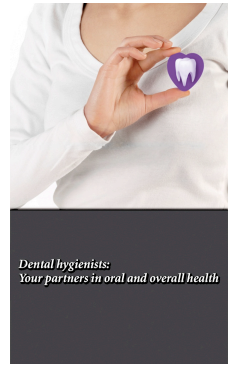
What does a dental hygienist do? Each one is a registered and certified health professional who specializes in preventing oral health problems and diseases. They work with individual clients or communities to prevent tooth, gum and mouth diseases and related injuries that can affect overall health. Dental hygiene services are provided to individuals of all ages from parents in prenatal classes to the elderly in long-term care centres.

How do you find one? A dental hygienist works in a variety of settings, including dental offices, public health units and seniors facilities. The simplest way to find one is through your local dental office; however, there are increasingly more dental hygienists that own and operate their own independent practices. More information can be obtained through the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association at 1-800-267-5235.

Additional tips and information on oral care is available online at www.cdha.ca .

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Dental hygienists:
Your partners in oral and overall health

Dental hygiene client's bill of rights.

(NC)—The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) offers the public a Dental Hygiene Client's Bill of Rights. It provides information on your rights when receiving dental hygiene care and what to expect of your dental hygienist. By understanding your rights, you can make better decisions regarding your own oral health.

You have the right to:

- choose the registered dental hygienist providing care;
- know the credentials of your dental hygienist;
- professional care based on current Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice;
- care guided by the Dental Hygiene Code of Ethics;
- confidentiality;
- be treated with respect;
- understand your care;
- participate in the choices about your care;
- benefit from prevention and health promotion strategies;
- care that meets your needs;
- be referred to other health care providers as necessary; and
- have your concerns heard and responded to by a provincial regulatory body.

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Five easy steps to good oral health

(NC)—It takes just a few minutes a day to help ensure good oral and overall health. Here are five simple things you should do:

1. Brush your teeth at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
2. Floss between your teeth daily.
3. Rinse using an antiseptic mouthwash.
4. Make healthy food choices. Nutritious food low in sugar is good for both oral and overall health.
5. Visit your dental hygienist regularly.

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How to get a healthy, happy smile

(NC)—Brush, floss, rinse and eat healthy foods every day. And don't forget to visit your dental hygienist regularly. This combination is key to a lifetime of good oral health and overall health that will have you smiling all the way to a healthier you. Additional tips and information is available online at www.cdha.ca.



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIREs

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What your dental hygienist knows could save your life

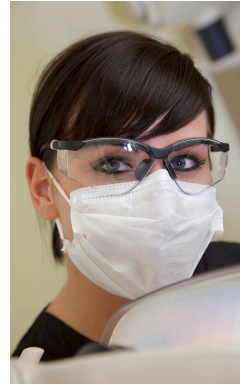
(NC)—The eyes may be the windows to the soul but the mouth is a gateway to the rest of the body. We once believed that the worst outcome of poor dental hygiene was tooth loss, but research clearly links oral health to overall health, so far more is at stake. The earliest signs of a number of serious health issues are reflected in the teeth, gums and tongue, often long before a diagnosis is made.

There are millions of bacteria in the mouth and ignoring oral health routines can lead to inflammation causing these bacteria to grow and spread at alarming rates and to find their way into the bloodstream. Unchecked plaque on your teeth can result in gingivitis, periodontal disease and tooth decay. Research suggests that periodontal disease is a risk factor contributing to serious life-threatening illnesses such as lung and heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Dental hygienists have the skills, knowledge and judgement to facilitate early detection of these issues. At a dental visit your hygienist will assess your health history, examine your head and neck and check your mouth. Together you will develop an oral hygiene care plan that includes prevention and treatment therapies to ensure the best overall health possible. If necessary, your dental hygienist may refer you to other healthcare professionals. You can't afford to wait. Periodontal disease can be prevented and controlled, thereby decreasing your chances of other serious illnesses.

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Oral cancer— not just your grandparent’s disease

(NC)—Oral Cancer is the 13th most common and fastest growing type of cancer, particularly for younger Canadians. Smoking, drinking, sun exposure of the lips and HPV are all risk factors in developing oral cancer. Here’s what to watch for:

- Red or white patches in the mouth
- Lump or thickening of tissue in the mouth, neck or face
- Sores in the mouth that bleed or do not heal within 14 days
- Numbness in face or mouth
- Wart like masses inside the mouth
- Pain or difficulty swallowing, speaking, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue
- Hoarse throat that lasts for a long period of time

Most cancers of the mouth can be treated if caught in time, and oral cancers are easily detected by dental hygienists who are familiar with the signs and symptoms. Reduce your risk; maintain regular dental hygiene appointments, and at your next visit request an oral cancer screening.

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