



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



For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Canada's Dental Hygienists Have Your Health at Heart



February 7, 2013 (Ottawa, ON) – Cardiovascular diseases including heart disease, diseases of the blood vessels and stroke are responsible for one-third of all deaths in Canada. February is Heart Month and Canada's dental hygienists want you to take your oral health to heart.

Your heart health is impacted by your oral health, and poor oral health can put you at elevated risk for cardiovascular diseases. Research suggests there is a strong correlation between oral and cardio health. Your chances of developing cardiovascular disease may increase if you have periodontal (gum) disease. Inflammation of the gums may trigger inflammation in other areas of the body such as the heart. Bleeding gums, a common symptom of gum disease, become a pathway for bacteria to travel from the mouth into the rest of the body. Once oral bacteria reach the arteries it is believed it can contribute to build up (called plaques) on the arterial walls. This build up can contribute to restricting normal blood flow and impact heart functioning, increasing the risk for heart disease.

Embracing the slogan, Oral Health for Total Health, Sandy Lawlor, president of Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) says, "Dental hygienists are your partners in oral and overall health". Proper oral hygiene techniques and improved oral health practices can help prevent heart disease. "Brushing, flossing, using oral rinses, eating a healthy diet and accessing regular professional dental hygiene care are all steps in the right direction to combat bacteria and prevent gum disease." adds Lawlor. Your dental hygienist will assess your health history, examine your head and neck, check your mouth, gums and teeth and together you will develop an oral hygiene care plan that includes prevention and treatment therapies to ensure the best health possible. If necessary, your dental hygienist may refer you to other healthcare providers.

2013 is a milestone year for dental hygienists in Canada as we celebrate 100 years of the founding of the dental hygiene profession and 50 years of CDHA, our national association. To celebrate these events, and in honour of heart month, dental hygienists across Canada are giving back, sharing their hearts, in another way this February.

On February 9, registered dental hygienists in more than 75 clinics across the country will open their hearts and practices to provide oral care services to the public at no cost. The Gift From the Heart campaign www.giftfromtheheart.ca, in its fifth consecutive year, offers a way for dental hygienists to reach out in their community and help members of the public who may be financially unable to receive oral care or have difficulty accessing dental hygiene services. Last year dental hygienists treated approximately 1,500 clients during this one-day volunteer event.

Heart health, oral health, overall health – all brought to you by your dental hygienist. We have your health at heart.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 24,000 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 16,500 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the 6th largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit: www.cdha.ca.

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