



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



For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Diabetes and Dental Hygiene

November 20, 2013 (Ottawa, ON) – As Canadians mark Diabetes Awareness Month this November, dental hygienists remind us that oral health professionals are important members of the diabetes health care team.

Research from the Canadian Diabetes Association shows that people with diabetes are particularly susceptible to oral health problems because of a lowered resistance to infection and exaggerated inflammatory responses. In fact, people living with diabetes are twice as likely as those without diabetes to develop gingivitis. Left untreated, gingivitis can lead to periodontal disease. Even more unsettling is that, if someone has diabetes and periodontal disease, controlling blood sugar levels becomes increasingly difficult, which could lead to more serious systemic complications such as blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke, and even amputation of extremities.

The good news is that periodontal disease can be prevented and controlled, especially if caught early, and the reduction of inflammation and infection actually helps to improve blood sugar levels. As Mary Bertone, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA), notes, “Dental hygienists can play a key role in decreasing the severity of diabetes by checking for early signs of gingivitis and periodontitis during regular dental visits and by actively participating in the individual’s diabetes health care team.” She encourages the 9 million Canadians who are living with diabetes and pre-diabetes to talk to their dental hygienist about developing an oral hygiene plan to maintain good oral and overall health. “Managing the complications of diabetes is challenging enough without the added worry of mouth infections, and bone loss that can lead to losing teeth,” Bertone adds. Dental hygienists are often able to identify potential signs of diabetes in clients who have not yet been diagnosed with the illness, so all Canadians should remember to visit their dental hygienist regularly as part of their regular oral care routine.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 26,800 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 17,000 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.dentalhygienecanada.ca.

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