



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

For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Tobacco and Your Teeth: Dental Hygiene.... For Life!

January 17, 2014 (Ottawa, ON) — Canada's dental hygienists will mark National Non-Smoking Week (January 19–25) by urging all Canadians to eliminate tobacco use for better oral and overall health.

While most people know that tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in Canada, few may be aware that the negative effects of tobacco are often first seen in the mouth. “Bad breath, discoloured teeth, accumulation of plaque and tartar, and periodontal (gum) disease—these are all consequences of tobacco use,” explains Mary Bertone, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA).

Dental hygienists are primary health providers who specialize in identifying and preventing oral health problems and diseases. “Our skills in health promotion, disease detection, and behavioural modification allow us to make significant contributions, particularly in the area of tobacco cessation,” adds Bertone. By encouraging a tobacco-free lifestyle and working with clients to develop a good oral care plan, dental hygienists can help to ensure optimal overall health, particularly when considering that periodontal disease is a risk factor for more serious illnesses, such as diabetes, heart and lung diseases, and stroke. Just as importantly, dental hygienists have the skills, knowledge, and judgment to facilitate early detection of oral cancer, another hazard of tobacco use, which is the 13th most common cancer in Canada.

“Educating clients about the visible changes in their mouths can be a powerful motivator for tobacco cessation and may ultimately save lives,” says Bertone. “Because tobacco use is the greatest avoidable risk factor for cancer in Canada, quitting should be a goal for all.” Visit your dental hygienist today to learn more about the links between tobacco and oral health, and protect your health for tomorrow.

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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