



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

For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Diabetes and Dental Hygiene

November 3, 2014 (Ottawa, ON) – As Canadians mark National Diabetes Awareness Month this November, dental hygienists remind us that oral health professionals are important members of the diabetes health care team.

According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, 9 million Canadians are living with diabetes or prediabetes. These individuals are particularly susceptible to oral health problems because of a lowered resistance to infection and exaggerated inflammatory responses. In particular, people living with diabetes are twice as likely as those without diabetes to develop gingivitis. Left untreated, gingivitis can lead to periodontal disease. This can result in increased difficulty in controlling blood sugar levels, which can lead to more serious systemic complications such as blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke, and even amputation of extremities.

As Mandy Hayre, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA), notes, “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 oral care routine.” Hayre adds, “Dental hygienists also check for early signs of gingivitis and periodontitis during regular dental visits and will work with their clients to develop an oral hygiene plan to maintain good oral and overall health.” 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. CDHA has produced an information brochure on the links between oral health and diabetes, which is available at http://www.cdha.ca/pdfs/OralCare/Educational_Resources_6.pdf.

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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