



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

For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

## Media Release

### Dental Hygienists Get to the Heart of the Matter

February 23, 2015 (Ottawa, ON) — February is Heart Month in Canada and, as primary health care providers, dental hygienists are strong supporters of this awareness campaign, educating their clients on the risks of heart disease and stroke and the links between oral health and overall physical, social, and mental well-being.

While many of us think that the worst outcome of poor dental hygiene is tooth loss, research suggests that poor oral health may increase your risk for cardiovascular disease, which now takes one life every 7 minutes in Canada. As Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) President Mandy Hayre explains, “There are millions of bacteria in the mouth. Ignoring oral health routines can lead to inflammation, causing these bacteria to grow and spread at alarming rates, even into the bloodstream, which may contribute to hardening of the arteries.”

Your dental hygienist will work with you during regular appointments to develop a good oral health care plan, and will screen for hypertension and other known risk factors for heart disease (such as smoking), encouraging those at greater risk to seek appropriate medical attention. In between dental visits, you can work to control the growth of bacteria in your mouth and improve your oral and overall health by following five simple steps:

1. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
2. Clean between the teeth and rinse with an antiseptic mouthwash daily.
3. Eat healthy foods and avoid sugary treats.
4. Eliminate tobacco use.
5. Visit your dental hygienist regularly.

Dental hygienists—your partners in prevention—urge all Canadians to take oral health to heart this February and throughout the year.

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](http://www.dentalhygienecanada.ca)

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