

Personal Health Starts in the Mouth

By Georgine Hunter

Michelle Black opened her independent dental hygiene practice, Confident Smiles, in 2009 in the Glebe with a mission to help her clients improve their oral health.

The advantages of good oral health are numerous. For starters, you can expect to live on average six years longer by maintaining healthy teeth and gums. A dental hygienist can help you achieve oral health that will lower your risk of: heart disease, respiratory problems and giving birth to low-birth weight or pre-term babies. In addition, a dental hygienist can also detect oral cancer at an early stage.

That is why Black purchased a new screening device; The VELscope Vx, which detects warning signs of anomalies. Oral cancer is on the rise and is now number 13 out of 27 known cancers. Black uses the VELscope Vx to discover lesions deep below the surface. "Early detection of oral cancer is crucial as it provides a much higher survival and recovery rate" She is one of five other practitioners in Ottawa to have a VELscope.

So Who's at Risk?

Smokers and heavy drinkers are the traditional groups with risk factors for this disease that targets men more often than women. But a new culprit, the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is causing oral cancer lesions in younger men and women who practice unprotected oral sex. HPV is now the leading cause of head and neck cancers.

Gift from the Heart: Free Oral Health Screening: February 11

For the second year, Michelle will be joining other independent dental hygiene practices across Ontario and Alberta by offering their services free of charge to those unable to normally afford preventative dental care. Scheduled near Valentine's Day, this service links heart health with oral health. (www.giftfromtheheart.ca) Appointments must be booked in advance.

By educating patients on how to improve oral health, Black says: "This vital information can lower your risk of developing heart disease which is the number one killer of women in Canada." Black will also use the VELscope during this day as part of the oral cancer screening process.



Dental hygienist, Michelle Black, performing an oral cancer screening.

Benefits of Independent Dental Hygienists

A major advantage of Confident Smiles are the convenient hours: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm, Monday to Friday. Personalized care and longer appointment times that run one-and-a-half hours provide ample time to: educate, answer questions and skillfully clean your teeth. Black also evaluates clients' diet, home-care routine, products and life changes.

Confident Smiles provides dental hygiene treatments in a serene, inviting and comfortable atmosphere. Absent are the grating drill sounds and pungent odors. The office is bright and modern with the latest equipment and Black uses scientifically-proven techniques.

Model Student, Teacher

Since graduating from Algonquin College in the top 10 of her class, Black worked for 18 years as a dental hygienist. The model student became a model clinical instructor at both Algonquin College and Canadian National Institute of Health. Black opened her own practice nearly three years ago.

New Client Discount: 30% off; or Free Teeth

Whitening with a New Client Referral

Confident Smiles is currently running a promotion that provides new customers with a 30% discount on their first dental hygiene assessment. The promotion runs until February 29, 2012.

Clients who make referrals will receive a \$50 discount off their next service or a free teeth whitening, a \$179 value, after the new customer has completed a treatment. Clients can also receive discounted pricing when booking an appointment for both dental hygiene treatment and tooth whitening.

Michelle Black, RDH, is the owner and sole operator of Confident Smiles Dental Hygiene & Tooth Whitening, 166 Second Avenue, behind Bridgehead on Bank. 613-799-2633, www.confidentmilesottawa.com

Georgina Hunter is an Ottawa Writer

For The Love Of Raw Chocolate

By Sarah Ives

As it nears Valentine's Day many of us start to think about chocolate: the ultimate Valentine's day gift (or at least the most common). We've all heard the health benefits of cocoa and dark chocolate repeatedly touted, however, did you know that in the process of heating and making cocoa, much of the nutritional benefit is destroyed? What, you say?

While it is still full of antioxidants (up to twice the level in red wine and three times the level in green tea), its raw, unprocessed counterpart, cacao, is said to have the highest antioxidant content of all food. Period. And, for those who need a quick refresher, antioxidants help our bodies neutralize free radicals, which are those pesky little molecules that can cause serious disease.

All cocoa powder comes from the

cacao bean, which grows in a pod native to South America (and rumored to have originated in the Andes), only the main difference is that cocoa has been heated and cacao has not. However, even unheated, cacao has an amazingly sharp flavor and raw chocolates are among some of the very best that exist. Raw cuisine currently features some of the most decadent and satisfying desserts, of all different types of cuisine. I have fooled many a person into thinking they were eating a cooked dessert, with my raw chocolate desserts.

Not only is cacao a potent source of antioxidants (about 7 times higher than that of roasted cocoa), it boasts loads of minerals and vitamin E, and is also known as an aphrodisiac! It's high content of tryptophan also helps to promote relaxation. All in all, cacao is a super food that tastes absolutely amazing and has a multitude of different forms: whether in a raw chocolate

bar, or as a filling for a raw chocolate pie, or even in a chocolate shake, the benefits of eating cacao are seemingly endless. So this Valentine's day, try getting your hands on some raw chocolate to please your loved one.

Sarah Ives is a raw food educa-

tor, who teaches quick and delicious ways to include more raw foods in your everyday life. Join her for a Raw Chocolate Class on February 11th, 2012 at 1:00pm. Visit www.ohmyraw.com to register in advance.



21 Day Cleanse
Sun, Feb 12th 1:30 pm

Raw Chocolate Workshop
Sat, Feb 11nd 1:00 pm

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