

Your Health Starts in Your Mouth

Caught in the Cookie Jar

As a dental hygienist, I know that the sweet sensation of sugary treats melting in your mouth tastes divine. I also know that sugar contributes to plaque that leads to tooth decay. I see in my practice that the main cavity culprits are sugary drinks and sweet sticky foods. That's why I encourage my patients to rinse their mouth with water or brush and floss soon after consuming sweets.

Knowing how plaque is formed may encourage you to start rinsing your teeth throughout the day. When sugar melts in your mouth it sticks to our teeth. Plaque is formed when the sticky sugar mixes with destructive bacteria in our mouths. Plaque grows quickly in size and thickness and it becomes a major source of tooth decay.

How to Prevent Plaque

The next time you drink a frappe, soda pop or an energy drink, find out the sugar content. Would you put 16 teaspoons into a beverage at home? If not, ask yourself if you really want that McCafe Moca Frappe because the 473 ml size contains a whopping 16.6 teaspoons or 70 grams of sugar. Starbucks' same-size mocha-cappuccino is a close contender with 51 grams of sugar.

Sip with a Straw

Use a straw when you drink as it moves the liquid to the back of the mouth and avoids contact with the

teeth.

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Brush after eating gummy candies, taffy, fruit roll-ups and caramels because these sugary foods feed bacteria that cause cavities and tooth decay or better yet just avoid these. Complex carbohydrates or starchy foods leave behind food particles that stick in the pits and fissures of your teeth. Try to brush after eating cream-filled cookies, peanut butter sandwiches and anything with oatmeal such as granola bars and oatmeal cookies and you will save yourself the time, pain and expense of getting teeth fixed.

Drinks and Foods that Clean our Teeth and Make them Strong

You can reduce plaque and prevent cavities by simply drinking green tea. You will also benefit from its fluoride content that helps reduce cavities and strengthens teeth.

Drink water to keep up your saliva production since water buffers the acids produced by sugar and helps to stabilize your mouth's pH balance to a neutral seven.

Milk contains phosphates that balance your pH level in the mouth and produces saliva. The calcium in milk, soy and rice milk strengthens your bones too. Chicken, turkey, and eggs also contain phosphorus which, with calcium, is one of the two most vital minerals to teeth and bones.

Pumpkins, carrots, sweet potatoes and broccoli contain the vitamin A which helps form tooth enamel. Sesame seeds are also a good source of calcium and taste wonderful toasted and served on stir fries.

Chew sugar-free gum as it stimulates saliva production, and helps to clean the surface of the teeth. Sugar-free gum made with xylitol - an all natural sweetener that looks and tastes like sugar is good for your teeth and health. It also can reduce the bad bacteria in your mouth, stabilize insulin levels and has no negative side effects. Xylitol sugar-substitute can also be put in hot drinks and baked goods.

Fiber rich food can force saliva into the trapped food in pits and fissures where most cavities occur. When you munch on raw cauliflower, cucumbers, carrots, apples and pears you are cleaning your teeth.

Talk to Your Dental Hygienist about Your Diet

Good oral health starts with what we put in our mouth. Did you know that dental hygienists are here to help you develop strategies to reduce your chance of developing decay? I help patients by making suggestions for change in small increments and can help you gradually reduce your sugar intake. Is there someone in your life whose hand gets caught in the cookie jar? Whether we are motivated by financial savings in avoiding costly

dental bills, a desire to lose weight or prevent diabetes, our mouth is our gateway to our body.

Regular Dental Care

We need to keep our oral health in top shape to keep our body in check. To help achieve good oral hygiene, I will discuss diet and can help clients develop healthy eating habits. As an independent dental hygienist, I book appointments 1.5 hours apart to ensure that I have adequate time to discuss my patients' health and diet before spending a full hour to perform a thorough cleaning.

New Client Discount: 30% off your next appt or Free Teeth Whitening with a New Client Referral

Clients who make referrals will receive a 30% discount off their next service or a free teeth whitening, a \$149 value, after the new customer has completed treatment. Clients can also receive discounted pricing when booking an appointment for both dental hygiene services and tooth whitening.

Michelle Black, RDH, is the owner and sole operator of Confident Smiles Dental Hygiene & Tooth Whitening and can be reached at: www.confident-smilesottawa.com or at: 613-799-2633

Michelle Black, RDH, owner of Confident Smiles.

Health Tips to Get You Ready For Spring!

By Dr. Melissa Baird

Now that winter is finally reaching its end, people are excited to get out in the sun. It's best to stay active through the whole year but to some this is not appealing during the cold of the winter months. With Spring on its way, here are some easy tips to boost your energy!

1. Drink plenty of water. Your fatigue can be a sign of dehydration. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated. It is best to drink water throughout the day. Eight glasses of water is the gold standard. Increase your water intake before physical activity and then sip water through your workout.

2. Eat breakfast! I am always surprised by how many people do not eat breakfast. After a night of not eating, your body needs fuel to get going in the morning. You will also find that people who eat a healthy breakfast are less likely to snack heavily through out the day and are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Fresh fruit, a glass of almond milk and steel cut oatmeal is a great way to start your morning.

3. Reach for a snack. Snacking though out the day will help to keep

your blood sugar levels consistent. Go for low glycemic foods such as apples and almonds. These are great health snacks that will fill your stomach and give you a good dose of fiber and nutrients.

4. Get moving! Whether you're an avid runner or a novice, running is a great exercise to get your heart rate up. When learning how to run, start with walk-run intervals gradually building up the time you are running. Physical activity is a great way to boost your energy levels and to reduce your stress. When you exercise, your body releases more serotonin - the happy hormone!

5. Stretch. Stretching often gets overlooked. With the current North American lifestyles, we are sitting for too many hours and have stress levels which are out of control. Stretching will help to maintain your muscles flexibility. Make sure you do a light warm up before exercise and stretching after. It is also important to take a few minutes throughout the day to stretch while at work.

6. Include exercise in your daily routine. Park your car as far away from the store entrance as possible. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. These are simple things you can do each day to increase your fitness level.

7. Get enough sleep. Sleep is often one of the first things to get cut when you're stressed out or have a huge project looming overhead. When you don't sleep, you will be more tired and your productivity will decrease. Sleep is not a 'waste of time' so take the time to turn off your mind and get a good night's rest. When you are well rested, you can think clearer and be more productive.

8. Find time to meditate. Finding a way to manage your stress is essential to keeping healthy. Taking a few minutes during the day to refocus your energy will help you to manage stress.

Remember if you've been sitting on the couch all winter long, your body will take a little time to get back into tip top shape. It can take up to six weeks to get into a regular active routine so be patient! Don't over do it! Listen to your body. If something isn't feeling right, take a step back from the activity and get yourself checked out by your health care provider.

Dr. Melissa Baird is a Chiropractor at Glebe Chiropractic Clinic. She can be contacted at 613 237 9000 or via Facebook at Glebe Chiropractic/Massage Therapy.

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