

October Wellness: Keep Smiling...

By Anne Praino

Your smile: it's one of the first impressions you make on others. Smiling serves many purposes from boosting our immune system, relieving stress, to communicating with others who may not even speak our language. It's an important tool for both inward and outward communication. Understanding this concept makes it clearer how detrimental it would be to have a smile that you are unhappy with. The stress this would cause may not only impact your social life, but your professional life as well. (Blake)



Statistics show that employees with a great smile are promoted faster. A bright and healthy smile is perceived as attractive, increasing your likeability as well as making you look approachable. Taking care of your teeth exudes good personal hygiene habits; co-workers and supervisors will notice this about you. Taking good care of your body suggests a strong work ethic. It gives the impression that if you take the time to look your best, then your work is most likely a further extension of that same attention to detail. And then there is of course, the silent killer, bad breath. At work, we are often communicating with clients and co-workers. Bad breath suggests poor oral hygiene and in turn can hinder career success. (Coleman)

There are bigger perils of poor dental hygiene, going deeper than social and professional faux pas. An unhealthy mouth, especially if you have gum disease, may increase your risk of several serious health problems as well. Bacteria in the mouth can potentially cause inflammation throughout the body. This inflammation could lead to a heart attack or stroke. Other studies suggest that a gum infection could cause insulin resistance and ultimately result in poorly controlled diabetes. There are studies that suggests slower development in low birth babies affected by the toxins released by oral bacteria. Your mouth is a window to the rest of your body and can be quite helpful in aiding medical professionals to determine your overall health. Doctors collect and test saliva to detect for a variety of substances and conditions—even certain cancers are detectable in saliva. (Coleman)

NOW that we have made our case. Your smile, and your mouth need your attention. October is National Dental Hygiene Month! The goal is simple — to keep our oral health on track. This may be an excuse to go out and buy that new toothbrush you have been eyeing!

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So, what do the experts recommend? I imagine you have heard it before-- brush twice a day for two minutes, floss every day, rinse with mouthwash. Is this news? We didn't think so. But this year, National Dental Hygiene Month is focusing on **four** routines that help people maintain healthy smiles: **Brush, Floss, Rinse** and **Chew**. This last step is perhaps something you may have not been aware of. (Chewing Gum to prevent cavities, n.d.)

Clinical studies have shown that chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes following meals can help prevent tooth decay. The chewing of sugarless gum increases the flow of saliva, which washes away food and other debris, neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth, and provides disease-fighting substances throughout the mouth. When selecting your gum of choice, be sure to check for the ADA seal so you know it has met the criteria for safety and effectiveness by the American Dental Association. (Chewing Gum to prevent cavities, n.d.; Association, n.d.)

>> THIS is where the October Wellness Challenge comes from. We at Tycor are challenging ourselves to chew a stick of sugarless gum every day after lunch for the month of October. Join us in this easy way to take a step towards a healthier mouth, a healthier body, and if we're lucky, maybe even a job promotion!

Sources

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