

Oral Hygiene Tips for Infants, Toddlers, Kids

Healthy teeth and gums are important for child's overall health. They help them to eat, talk, smile, and also to develop self-confidence. Poor oral care leads to caries, infections, early loss of teeth or other teeth and gum related problem.

Beginning of dental care as early as possible is important for child's health and to keep teeth healthy for a lifetime. Healthy baby teeth help them to eat and speak clearly. Deciduous teeth guide permanent adult teeth into the proper position. Hence, it is important to keep them healthy. Different age groups require different oral care.

Pre-birth period:

Maternal oral health has significant implications for birth outcomes and infant oral health. A baby's teeth start to form right from pre birth period during pregnancy. By the time the baby is born, a full set of primary teeth has begun to form underneath the baby's gums. The best source of minerals needed to calcify the baby's teeth is from an increased intake of dairy foods (or other calcium-rich foods and drinks) by the mother. A nutritious diet and good dental hygiene during pregnancy will ensure that mother's and baby's teeth will be healthy and strong.

Birth to 6 months of age:

Practicing healthy habits can prevent or reduce caries in infants and children. Always clean infant's gums after feeding by wrapping a moistened clean cloth around the index finger of hand. Do not put a baby to bed with a milk bottle in their mouth.

Teething: Teething can cause some pain and discomfort for babies – including red, swollen and sore gums. The management of teething includes:

- Allow a baby to bite teething rings (chilled)
- Hard sugar-free teething rusks/bread-sticks/oven-hardened bread
- Cucumber peeled
- Pacifier (even frozen)
- Frozen items (anything from ice cubes to frozen bagels, frozen banana, sliced fruits, vegetables)
- Rub gums with clean finger, cool spoon, wet gauze
- Reassurance
- Analgesics/antipyretics
- Topical anesthetics.

6-12 months of age:

As soon as a tooth comes in, use a child's soft bristled toothbrush, with no toothpaste, in addition to massaging the gum tissues. Try to feed an infant with more solid food and also allow them to drink liquid food from cup rather than from bottle. As caries are infectious transmissible disease, sharing

spoons, feeding child with half chewed food by mother should not be practiced.

Lift a child's lips regularly to check for suspicious small white or brown spots on his/her teeth. If these spots are present, they may indicate caries, schedule an appointment with dentist right away. Schedule child's first dental appointment before his/her first birthday or within 6 months after the first tooth erupts. If drinking water is not fluoridated, talk to pediatrician about infant fluoride supplements.

12 to 18 months of age:

By the age of one, a child should have an oral examination by a dentist. Continue to brush a child's teeth twice a day with plain water Regularly, lift a child's lips to check for suspicious small white or brown spots on his/her teeth which indicate caries. Schedule an appointment with dentist regularly.

18 months to age 5:

By 30 months of age, all the primary teeth erupt into the mouth. At age 2, begin brushing with a pea-sized amount (small smear) of fluoridated toothpaste. Teach a child to spit out the toothpaste. Observe to insure that child does not swallow the toothpaste. Teach a child to brush his/her teeth. Generally, children will need help with brushing until they have the hand coordination to clean their own teeth effectively. Children should be able to brush unsupervised by the age of six or seven.

Continue to regularly lift your child's lip to check for suspicious small white or brown spots on his/her teeth. If you see these white or brown spots, which may indicate caries, schedule an appointment with your dentist right away. By age 3, most toddlers stop using the pacifier and/or sucking his/her thumb. Consult to a dentist if child over age 3 regularly sucks a pacifier or fingers or a thumb.

Help make dental hygiene fun with these tips:

1. Let children help choose their own toothbrush with their favourite color and character. They can pick their favourite flavour in tooth paste.
2. Allow them to watch the videos and read books that talk about dental hygiene.
3. Use a timer or play their favourite song to make sure kid brush their teeth for 2 minutes
4. Reward them for maintaining good oral hygiene.
5. Give saliva time to work

The minerals in teeth are constantly replaced by saliva, it also wash away acids. Hence, saliva is the body's natural defence against caries. To give saliva enough time to work, limit the frequency of food and drink intake (other than water) throughout the day. Choose "tooth friendly" snacks such as dairy products, fruits and vegetables, etc.

Fluoride:

It is documented that the use of fluoride is the safest and effective method for the prevention and control of caries. It is important to administer the fluoride optimally, to all dentate infants and children. Decisions concerning the administration of fluoride are based on the unique needs of each patient. When determining the risk-benefit of fluoride, the key issue is mild fluorosis versus preventing dental caries. In children with moderate or high caries risk under the age of 2, a “smear” of fluoridated toothpaste should be used.

In all children aged 2–5 years, a “pea-size” amount should be used. Professionally applied topical fluoride, such as fluoride varnish, fluoride gels should be considered for children at risk for caries. Systemically-administered fluoride should be considered for all children at caries risk who drink fluoride deficient water (<0.6 ppm) after determining all other dietary sources of fluoride exposure. Careful monitoring of fluoride is indicated in the use of fluoride-containing products.

Prevention of Injury

Infants and toddlers should be protected from injuries caused by toys, play objects, electronic devices, fall due to improper balancing, etc. Age-appropriate injury prevention counselling for orofacial trauma, should be provided by the practitioners. Preventive approach like use of properly fitted mouth guards sporting activities that carry the risk of orofacial injury should be implemented.

Pedodontists should coordinate with other dentists and child health professionals, school administrators, legislators, and community sports organizations to promote the broader use of mouth guards and other safety appliances. The coaches/administrators of organized sports should consult a dentist with expertise in orofacial injuries before initiating practices for a sporting season, for recommendations for immediate management of sports-related injuries (e.g, avulsed teeth).

Nonnutritive habits:

Nonnutritive oral habits (e.g, digit or pacifier sucking, bruxism, and abnormal tongue thrust) may apply forces to teeth and dentoalveolar structures. It is important to discuss the need for early sucking and the need to wean infants from these habits before malocclusion or skeletal dysplasias occur.

The goal of the society, “every child has a fundamental right to his or her total oral health” can be achieved only if the health-care professional involved with children, parents, school teachers work together in providing comprehensive care for the child. Preventive dental assessment and treatment (fluoride varnish, preschool and school tooth brushing, early preventive counselling) program need to be implemented. By properly implementing the oral hygiene, It is possible to prevent many forms of dental diseases and thus promote the total health of child patients.

Protocol to manage oral health – Tips for the community

Oral health is not separate from general health, but maintaining oral health is definitely difficult if one doesn't know the protocol for maintenance. Oral hygiene is the practice of maintaining a clean oral cavity to prevent dental problems, such as dental cavities, gingivitis, periodontitis, and bad breath. Proper oral hygiene is not only about clean teeth and fresh breath but it is also one of the best ways to help maintain good overall health. Oral health is a fundamental part of the general health and well-being of an individual. It can be achieved by maintaining a good oral hygiene.

Oral hygiene practices, such as brushing regularly, using fluoridated tooth paste, using aids, such as floss to clean interdental spaces, avoiding in-between meals, changing toothbrush at regular intervals, visiting the dentist regularly, and avoiding tobacco products holistically assist in accomplishing proper oral health.

Despite a decline in dental caries in developing countries, there is still a high prevalence of oral diseases. Hence there is a need to formulate a proper and comprehensive protocol for managing oral health. Hence we attempt to formulate such a protocol and also list some tips on the same for the community.

Dental Visits:

1. All patients should be encouraged to regularly visit the dentist, at least once every 6 months.
2. Patients should disclose HIV status to their dentists.
3. Preventive, restorative, palliative, rehabilitative services should be provided.

Dental Hygiene:

- Maintaining good oral hygiene reduces possible sources of infection and maintains integrity of teeth and gums.
- Maintenance of oral hygiene begins right from birth. Use of appropriate mouth wash and tooth paste aid in maintenance of oral hygiene. It includes,

Mouth Care:

- Involves the teeth, gums, palate and tongue
- Patients should be encouraged to:
 - Brush teeth, at least twice/day or after meals
 - Soft toothbrush, replace every 1 – 2 months
 - Use toothpaste that contains fluoride
 - Floss after meals (be cautious with low platelet counts)

- Regularly using an alcohol – free mouthwash
- Moisturize and lubricate lips and mucosa as needed

Oral Care:

- Brush 2 times/day with fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily – (gently but thoroughly)
- Using of tongue cleaner twice daily
- Home fluoride program as appropriate
- Avoid constant snacking
- Avoid tobacco products
- Avoid alcohol

Denture Care:

- Patients should be instructed to clean dentures and partials as thoroughly and as often as natural teeth, at least twice/day.
- A denture brush or toothbrush should be used and all surfaces brushed with toothpaste.
- Patient should check the mouth and gums after removing dentures for signs of irritation, redness or swelling.

- The entire oral mucosa should be cleaned after removing dentures. If painful or bleeding, oral swabs or saline-soaked gauze should be used.
- Dentures should be soaked in denture cleansing solution for several minutes or overnight.

Candidiasis Treatment – for Partials and/or Dentures:

- Remove and thoroughly clean daily
- Soak in 1:1 dilution of chlorhexidine gluconate (PerioGard/Peridex)
- 1% sodium hypochlorite (if no metal)
- Benzalkonium chloride 1:750 if metal
- May use Fungizone on tissue side of denture or Nystatin powder before insertion

****Get a NEW toothbrush**

Nutritional Status:

- Promote healing with a diet high in protein and calories.
- The patient should eat multiple small amounts each day.
- Supplement meals with vitamins and minerals

- Avoid foods that are coarse, rough, acidic or spicy, sugary foods, colas, fried snacks.
- Eat warm foods rather than hot.
- Cold or frozen foods such as pops, ice cream, and frozen yogurt are soothing and refreshing.

Oral Pain/ Oral ulcers:

Use topical anesthetics as needed but especially before meals

*Note – gag reflex may be diminished or lost

Analgesic Mouth Rinse

- For temporary relief or pain from oral ulcers
- 80 ml 2% viscous xylocaine and 100 ml distilled water
- Swish for 1 minute and expectorate

Management of oral health during pregnancy:

1. It is important for dental providers to know that a woman is pregnant as she may be at risk for certain oral conditions. A woman should inform the dental team if she is pregnant, of her expected due date, and if her pregnancy is high risk.

2. During pregnancy, physiological changes occur that may adversely affect oral health, such as dental caries, pregnancy gingivitis, periodontitis (gum disease), pregnancy tumor (pyogenic granuloma), and tooth erosion.

These conditions can be prevented and treated, so women should visit the dentist before or as early in pregnancy as possible.

3. Dental X-rays with lead shielding are considered safe during pregnancy by the American Dental Association.³ Even though radiation exposure from dental X-rays is low, once a decision to obtain X-rays is made -

It is the dental provider's responsibility to follow the ALARA Principle (As Low as Reasonably Achievable) to minimize the patient's exposure.

4. Children born to women with poor oral health and high levels of caries-causing bacteria are at high risk of developing dental caries. Restoring active carious lesions before delivery may reduce the child's risk of dental caries.

Pregnancy is an opportune time to educate women on the importance of their own oral health and the health of their future child. Poor prenatal nutrition may also affect a child's tooth development.

Oral health tips:

The patient should get a dental checkup and full mouth dental treatments done before pregnancy to avoid flareups and dental pain during pregnancy.

1. See a dentist as early in your pregnancy as possible.
2. Brush teeth twice a day with fluoridated toothpaste.
3. Floss once a day.
4. Choose healthy snacks and avoid foods and drinks containing sugar.
5. If you vomit, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda in a cup of water and delay toothbrushing for about an hour.
6. Tell the dentist and dental hygienist that you are pregnant and your due date. All dental treatment should be completed between 3-6 months of pregnancy.
7. Dental care, including the use of digital X-rays, pain medications like paracetamol and local anaesthesia, is safe during pregnancy.
8. Eat a balanced and nutritious diet. ° Avoid foods high in sugar. Also avoid beverages high in sugar like juice, fruit-flavoured drinks, and soda.
9. If you have problems with nausea, eat small amounts of healthy foods throughout the day.
10. Drink fluoridated water throughout the day, especially between meals.
11. Most tap water contains fluoride which prevents cavities.
12. Most water filters do not removes fluoride.
13. Attend prenatal classes.

- 14. Stop use of all tobacco products and recreational drugs.**
- 15. Avoid second hand smoke.**
- 16. Do not drink alcohol.**
- 17. Take folic acid and iron supplements as recommended by your prenatal doctor or nurse.**

Tips for Good Oral Health During Infancy:

- 1. Beginning soon after birth, clean your child's gums daily with a clean, wet washcloth.**
- 2. Do not put your child to bed with a milk bottle. Children should be weaned from a bottle between 12 and 14 months.**
- 3. Avoid saliva-sharing activities (sharing utensils like spoons, cleaning pacifier in your mouth) as cavity-causing bacteria can be passed from mother to child.**
- 4. Once teeth come in, start brushing twice a day with a smear of fluoride toothpaste for children under age 3. For children ages 3 and above, a pea-size amount of tooth paste should be used.**
- 5. Avoid giving your child foods and drinks containing sugar. Children should not have fruit juice during their first year.**
- 6. Lift the child's lip once a month to look for cavities.**
- 7. The child should see a dentist immediately if there are signs of cavities.**

8. At one-year well-child visit, ask doctor about child's oral health and fluoride.
9. Children should have their first dental visit by age 1.

Oral health is an essential component of general health. In fact, medical research has revealed links between common oral infections and serious general health conditions, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes. It is therefore of utmost importance to maintain the health of the teeth, gums, and other oral tissues. This protocol should start in early childhood and continue throughout life. So far no protocol has been proposed/ published which includes tips to maintain oral hygiene. This article aims to provide a protocol and tips to maintain oral hygiene which would be useful for the community at large.

ORAL HEALTH AFFECTS OVERALL HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

Most people don't connect their mouths to the rest of their bodies. However there is an established link. Research has shown that caries and periodontal disease may contribute to many serious health conditions. With mounting scientific evidence, the connection between oral infections and other diseases in the body is becoming widely understood and accepted. Periodontitis and caries are chronic, contagious oral infections that can lead to major health concerns and negatively affect the course of other diseases and treatments. Prevention is considered as the key to maintaining good

overall health. Proper oral care and regular professional scaling (cleaning) by a dental professional are important for keeping the mouth and body healthy.

Health Canada, The World Health Organization, the Ontario government and data from international research continues to place emphasis on preventive medicine and the knowledge that “the public cannot be systemically healthy without having oral health.”

THE MOUTH-BODY CONNECTION

Some research studies strongly suggest a link between periodontal disease and a person’s overall health. Microorganisms (e.g., bacteria) from oral infections can enter the blood stream or airways and travel to other parts of the body. These micro-organisms have the potential to worsen or increase the risk for other types of health problems such as heart disease, stroke and respiratory disorders. Existing gum infections can also make it difficult to control diabetes and may contribute to premature and/or low birth weight babies.

According to ongoing studies: on **Heart disease and stroke** – Bacteria from diseased gums can contribute to the formation of artery-clogging plaques and infective endocarditis, a condition in which the interior lining of the heart and heart valves become inflamed. Left untreated, this condition could lead to a fatal infection. A national study of Canadians between the ages of 36 and 69 found that those with severe gum disease had between three to seven times the risk of fatal coronary heart disease.

Respiratory disorders – Some respiratory infections are caused by inhaling micro-organisms from the mouth and throat into the lungs. When these oral micro-organisms reach the lower respiratory tract, they may cause an infection or worsen an existing lung infection such as pneumonia, bronchitis, emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Diabetes – People affected by diabetes are prone to a variety of bacterial infections, including gum disease. Oral infections can make it difficult to control diabetes and cause diabetic infections and complications, since the bacteria from severe gum disease may increase both blood sugar levels and the length of time the body struggles with high blood sugar.

Pregnancy – Bacteria from gum disease may trigger an inflammatory response that might induce premature labour and delivery. Poor oral health has been linked to sleeping problems, as well as behavioural and developmental problems in children. Also, researchers are reporting a connection between poor oral health and some cancers, e.g., oral cancer, pancreatic cancer.

THE ROLE OF THE DENTAL PROFESSIONALS :

While it was once believed that the worst outcome of gum disease was tooth loss, it is now becoming well known that oral infections have the potential to worsen or cause other types of systemic health problems. The mouth is now a critical factor in determining what is going on in the rest of the body. Oral cavity is the gate way to overall health. Dental professionals

have a distinctive clinical role in preventing gum disease and tooth decay, thereby making a significant contribution to a person's well-being and overall health. As important members of the health-care team, their primary concern is promoting good oral health.

With regular professional scaling, dental professionals can help control the bacteria that cause gum disease and tooth decay. Maintaining good oral health requires collaboration between the dentist and the patient. Dental professionals now work with many health-care professionals and may refer patients to oral surgeons, physicians, dermatologists, nutritionists, pharmacists and dentists as per the treatment requirement.

Preventive Dental hygiene care and primary treatment usually includes:

- Reviewing the patient's medical history to investigate any medical conditions that could affect dental treatment.
- Examining the head, neck and mouth including teeth, gingiva and tongue, which includes oral cancer screening to detect anything abnormal such as a sore or lesion that may indicate early stages of oral cancer.
- Using a periodontal probe to measure pockets and documenting the findings.
- Cleaning of teeth to remove plaque bacteria and hardened or calcified plaque build-up (calculus). Treating gum infection through a specialist, Periodontist can improve the overall health.
- Providing education and counselling on oral disease prevention.

STAYING HEALTHY –

With regular and effective oral care, gingival disease can be prevented, controlled or even reversed in the early stages. Between dental hygiene appointments, it is important for the patient to maintain good oral hygiene by:

- Brushing twice a day for atleast two minutes using a soft toothbrush and fluoridated toothpaste.
 - Cleaning or flossing between the teeth and the gums once a day to remove interdental food and plaque.
 - Cleaning or scraping the tongue at least once daily.
 - Using a mouth rinse once a day.
 - Checking gums/mouth regularly and reporting any changes or signs of gum disease (bleeding gums, foul odour, reddened gums) to a dental professional.
- Conduct self-examinations for oral cancer.
- Eating a nutritional and well-balanced diet
 - Lastly, by not smoking or using smokeless tobacco.

It is important to take care of our teeth, gums and oral health as lack of oral maintenance can not only lead to tooth loss and gum disease but it can seriously impact overall health and quality of life. Routine brushing and flossing after each meal is imperative to maintaining good oral health, along with regular scaling and dental examination.

Good oral health will improve overall well-being and enable to identify warning symptoms before conditions worsen. If you have *periodontitis*, it is

critical for you to continue regular examination with your dentist to treat and cure your gum disease, before it develops into a more serious illness.

BEGINNER's GUIDE TO DENTAL IMPLANTS-

A Patient Education Initiative

Today, dental implants are the state-of-the-art and ideal tooth replacement systems and are now more common than ever before. In the past, implants often failed. However now, the typical life of an implant is about 15 years or longer. Today, about 98% of implants are successful if taken care of properly.

What are dental implants?

Dental implants are metal devices that are surgically inserted into the jawbone in order to replace one or more missing teeth. Dental implants support a dental prosthesis such as a crown, bridge, removable dentures but sometimes they may act as orthodontic anchors (in order to align and straighten teeth).

Implant-supported bridge / Implant-supported denture

First, a surgical procedure is required to place the dental implant inside the jawbone. The basis for modern dental implants is a biologic process called osseointegration where materials, such as titanium, form an intimate bond

with the bone. A variable amount of healing time is required for osseointegration (3 to 6 months).

After the healing time, an abutment is attached to the implant. The abutment will hold the dental prosthesis (crown, bridge, removable denture).

ADVANTAGES:

A lot of patients may wonder why they should choose dental implants (which entail a higher cost) over traditional dental restorations supported on natural teeth.

The great advantage of a dental implant is that it replaces the missing tooth in the most natural way possible. Dental implants "fuse" with the bone due to the biological process called osseointegration. The main objective of any dental restoration is the proper replacement of the missing teeth.

Teeth have 3 functions: Chewing, Aesthetics, and Pronunciation. When a dental restoration is designed, one of the main goals is to restore these functions as close as possible to natural teeth.

Let's compare implant restorations to traditional restoration in rehabilitating teeth's main functions:

Chewing forces in case of a dental implant

Chewing forces in case of a removable dentures

- ☐ Aesthetics
- ☐ Phonation or pronunciation

Other important advantages

Independent tooth support.

***Single tooth gap:** if a traditional dental bridge is designed, the preparation of the adjacent teeth is required. However if an implant-supported crown is manufactured, the adjacent teeth remain untouched.*

- ☐ Dental implants preserves bone and significantly reduces bone resorption and deterioration that results in loss of jawbone height.
- ☐ Implant supported dentures may allow chewing the food better and speaking more clearly. Studies have shown that these prostheses contribute to improved chewing efficiency and speaking, compared to full dentures.

Dental implants drawbacks

If there are no general or local contraindications, dental implants have few drawbacks.

- ☐ A surgical procedure for implant placement and a period of healing may sometimes be necessary before the prosthesis may be completed.
- ☐ Dental implant procedures may entail an increase in cost compared to conventional dentistry.

Indications

Dental implants can successfully restore all forms of partial edentulism (one or several teeth are missing) and complete edentulism (all teeth from a dental arch are missing).

Situations when dental implants are strongly indicated:

- Single unit toothless gap with healthy adjacent teeth

When a single tooth is missing, an implant-supported crown will preserve the adjacent natural teeth by avoiding the need to prepare/cut them. If the toothless gap is restored with a traditional dental bridge, both adjacent teeth will have to be prepared/cut.

This involves permanently removing parts of the teeth's original structure, including portions that might still be healthy and structurally sound.

Single unit toothless gap

An implant-supported crown is the best treatment option.

- Partial edentulism with the back (posterior) tooth missing

These conditions imply the absence of several posterior (back) teeth (molars and/or premolars) on one or both sides of the dental arch (Kennedy class 1 or Kennedy class 2).

In these cases, traditional dental bridges (supported by natural teeth) are difficult to design because the back support tooth is missing. Removable partial dentures generally require the preparation of several teeth.

Implant supported prostheses, although entailing a higher cost, are highly indicated in these clinical situations.

□ **Complete edentulism**

When all teeth are missing, the only traditional solution available is a *full removable denture*. Implant supported prosthesis (either fixed or removable) allow to chew the food better, speak more clearly and they have a superior stability.

□ **Other situations when dental implants may be indicated**

- o Patients who cannot tolerate a removable restoration (removable denture).
- o Patients with high aesthetic and/or functional demands.

Contraindications

General contraindications

a. Absolute contraindications

Some *serious general conditions* make anaesthesia, surgical procedures and the overall placement inadvisable.

1. Heart diseases affecting the valves, recent infarcts, severe cardiac insufficiency, cardiomyopathy

2. Active cancer, certain bone diseases (osteomalacia, Paget's disease, brittle bones syndrome, etc.)
3. Certain immunological diseases, immunosuppressant treatments, clinical AIDS, awaiting an organ transplant
4. Certain mental diseases
5. Strongly irradiated jaw bones (radiotherapy treatment)
6. Treatments of osteoporosis or some cancers by *bisphosphonates*

b. Relative contraindications

Other situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Most often, dental implants can only be placed (with the greatest caution) after some preliminary treatments.

1. Diabetes (particularly insulin-dependent)
2. Angina pectoris (angina)
3. Significant consumption of tobacco
4. Certain mental diseases
5. Certain auto-immunes diseases
6. Drug and alcohol dependency
7. Pregnancy

Age

1. Children: not before the jaw bones have stopped growing (in general 17-18 years).
2. On the other hand, advanced age does not pose problems *if the patient's general condition is good.*

Local contraindications

Some conditions or physiological changes, usually inside the mouth cavity, may temporarily prevent the placement of dental implants. Most of the times, these conditions can be remedied before the implants are inserted in the jawbone.

□ There is insufficient bone to support the implants or bone structure is inadequate (due to some chronic infections or other conditions). To ensure a good prognosis, a dental implant must be completely surrounded by healthy bone tissue.

A dental implant must be surrounded by healthy bone tissue.

□ Important anatomical structures such as the maxillary sinus, the inferior alveolar nerve (located inside the mandible), could have an abnormal position that can interfere with the dental implants.

Lowering of the maxillary sinus

Adjunctive surgical procedures may have to be performed before the placement of dental implants. These procedures aim to increase the amount of bone, so more bone is available to support the implants.

1. Some local diseases of the oral mucosa or alveolar bone can temporarily prevent the placement of dental implants until the conditions are treated.

2. Hypersensitivity or other allergic reactions; rarely occurs.
3. Poor oral hygiene.
4. Bruxism or involuntary grinding of the teeth.

What is the **structure of a dental implant restoration**?

Most often, a dental implant restoration consists of 3 parts:

1. **Dental implant** - A surgical component that interfaces with the bone of the jaw or skull to support a dental prosthesis such as a crown, bridge or removable denture.

A surgical procedure is required to place the dental implant inside the jawbone. One or more implants may be required for specific cases.

For example, when a single tooth is missing, a single implant will be positioned. If all teeth from a dental arch are missing, 4 to 8 implants may be required to support the full mouth restoration.

2. **Abutment** - Implant abutments are artificial devices that are connected to the dental implants after the healing process is over.

The abutments are used to attach a crown, bridge, or removable denture to the implant fixtures.

3. **Prosthetic device** - Dental implants can support a large variety of prosthetic devices: dental crowns, dental bridges and various types of implant-supported removable dentures.

To summarize there are many **advantages of dental implants**, including:

1. **Improved appearance.** Dental implants look and feel like your own teeth. And because they are designed to fuse with bone, they become permanent.
2. **Improved speech.** With a poor fit, the dentures can slip within the mouth causing you to mumble or slur your words. Dental implants allow you to speak without the worry that teeth might slip.
3. **Improved comfort.** Implants eliminate the discomfort associated with removable dentures.
4. **Easier eating.** Sliding dentures can make chewing difficult. Dental implants function like your own teeth, allowing you to eat your favourite foods with confidence and without pain.
5. **Improved self-esteem.** Dental implants can give you back your smile and help you feel better about yourself.

6. Improved oral health. Dental implants doesn't require reducing other teeth, as a tooth-supported bridge does. Because nearby teeth are not altered to support the implant, more of your own teeth are left intact, improving long-term oral health. Individual implants also allow easier access between teeth, improving oral hygiene.

Durability. Implants are durable and will last many years. With good care, many implants can last a lifetime. **Convenience.** Removable dentures are just that; removable. Dental implants eliminate the embarrassing inconvenience of removing dentures, as well as the need for messy adhesives to keep them in place. Success rates of dental implants vary, depending on where in the jaw the implants are placed however, in general, dental implants have a success rate of up to 98%. **With proper care, implants can last a lifetime.**

Facts about Oral Cancer

Oral cancer is an abnormal uncontrolled growth of oral tissues and cells. It is one of the most common type of preventable cancers in the world. In India it is the most common cancer found in males.

The most common cause of cancer is tobacco. Tobacco has nicotine, which is a toxic poison and acts with great speed. It also has an addictive effect. All the other constituents are highly toxic for our body.

Smoking causes cancer of the oral cavity, lungs and also stomach.

Common complaints of oral cancer patients include mouth ulcers that is a red, painful patch that don't heal for more than several days, thickening of skin or oral mucosa or loosening of teeth without any

apparent reason. Patients also show increasing swelling in their jaw and neck region. Patients can also complain of difficulty in swallowing and mouth opening. They may have pain in the neck or ear region. They may have burning sensation while eating spicy food. Multiple ulcers are seen on gums along with bleeding.

Diagnostic signs of oral cancer include -

- Non healing ulcer lasting for more than 2 weeks
- Bony hard swelling in neck and facial region
- White or reddish patches on gums, tongue etc with or without ulceration
- Restricted opening of mouth
- Loss of sensation
- Lump in throat with hoarseness
- Overgrowth in the mouth
- Spontaneous bleeding
- Ill-fitting dentures
- Unexplained weight loss and loss of appetite
- Restricted movement of tongue
- Burning sensation

If any of the above symptoms are seen patient must visit his/her dentist. Investigations performed during such conditions are a complete blood count, CBCT scan, a full mouth Xray (OPG), MRI or CT scan, Biopsy, FNAC etc.

Treatment plan always begins with patient's counselling for stoppage of the habit. Patient is educated about the harmful effects of tobacco including its constituents.

If the patient displays a white patch inside his/her mouth, it can be a pre-malignant lesion which has a capability of turning into oral cancer. Immediate treatment is initiated for such patients including oral vitamin supplement, antifungal drugs and most importantly complete stoppage of the habit.

If diagnosed with oral cancer, the treatment can vary. The entire tumor mass is removed by a surgical operations sometimes along with infected/affected bones. Surgery is carried along with an intensive dose of chemotherapy/ radiotherapy. If oral cancer has spread to the rest of the body it can also lead to death.

Therefore it is high time we become aware of our harmful habits and stop before it's too late. Taking one single step can save your life. Anything unusual in the mouth should be reported to the dentist for further evaluation and testing.

Relive your dental pain - Get RCT done

Dental pain is a common condition affecting decayed teeth and causes severe discomfort for the patient. They may experience severe dental pain at night, pain on chewing food, pain on taking anything hot/cold and it may get relieved only on taking painkillers. The cause remains infection in the tooth and pus spreading into the gums which may lead to gum swelling too. The pain may spread to the ear and cause a headache too.

The most common treatment for this type of dental pain has been root canal treatment (RCT). This enables us to save the tooth and restore it with a dental cap/ crown. This procedure opens up the tooth thus enabling us to drain out the pus and infection from the tooth itself. The tooth is irrigated with antibacterial medicines to flush out the infection.

After cleaning the tooth to remove all of the infection, it is completed filled with false nerves to close the gaps and spaces within the tooth. This is followed by giving a permanent top filling and placing a dental cap on top of this tooth. This procedure may require one to multiple appointments depending on the severity of the infection.

This procedure is done under local anesthesia and hence is a painless procedure. Hence, Root canal treatment remains one of the best treatments to manage your dental pain.

WHAT IS GUM DISEASE?

Gum disease or pyorrhoea is a serious gum infection that damages the soft tissue and destroys the bone that supports your teeth. It can cause your teeth to loosen and eventually fall out.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE GUM DISEASE OR PERIODONTITIS?

1. BLEEDING GUMS:

You may see increased bleeding from the gums which may occur during brushing or eating, or anytime throughout the day.

2. RED, PUFFY GUMS:

The gums may be swollen or puffy and you may notice a change in colour to bright red or dusky red.

3. TENDER GUMS:

Gums may feel tender when touched accompanied by painful chewing. You may notice pus between your teeth and gums.

4. CHANGE IN POSITION OF GUMS:

Gums that pull away from your teeth and go down may cause teeth to look longer than normal.

5. LOOSE TEETH:

As the gums move away from the teeth, the teeth become loose and may even fall off.

6. CHANGE IN POSITION OF TEETH:

You may notice new spaces being created between your teeth over time due to movement of teeth and bone loss. Eventually the teeth look like they are spreading out.

7. BONE LOSS:

Most of the changes mentioned above occur due to loss of bone around the teeth which will lead to loss of teeth entirely.

8. GAPS BETWEEN TEETH & GUMS:

A gap is created between the tooth and the gums which will lead to collection of food particles, dirt and bacteria which can further progress the gum infection

9. EXPOSURE OF ROOTS:

Due to the pulling down of gums and gaps created between the tooth and the gums, there can be exposure of tooth roots leading to root decay and sensitivity that were originally covered by healthy gums.

10. BAD BREATH:

You may experience bad smell in your mouth even after rinsing and brushing.

CONSEQUENCES OF PERIODONTITIS -WHAT DOES IT LEAD TO?

Periodontitis is the leading cause of tooth loss. If this gum infection is not stopped in time, then the supporting structures of the teeth including the surrounding bone is destroyed.

Other problems you may experience include pus in the gums accompanied by pain, shifting of the tooth along with unsightly lengthening of teeth making tooth visible, as a result of movement of gums. If left untreated, this can cause severe effects on general health.

MANAGEMENT OF PERIODONTITIS – HOW DO I PREVENT THIS ?

- Regular tooth brushing twice daily in front of a mirror.**
- Use of tongue cleaner to remove the food particles, dirt and bacteria collected on the tongue.**
- Use dental floss and interdental brushes to clean the spaces between teeth.**
- Use mouthwash or mouth rinse as prescribed by your dentist as an antibacterial and to prevent bad breath.**
- Rinse with water or gargle after every meal to prevent collection of food particles.**
- Immediately consult your nearest periodontist if you notice the aforementioned signs or symptoms.**

HOW DO I GET PERIODONTITIS TREATED?

PROFESSION ORAL CLEANING:

- This includes routine cleaning and polishing of the teeth by the dentist.**

ANTIBIOTIC THERAPY:

- Antibiotics may be given to deal with active gum infection which has not responded to professional oral cleaning and polishing. After this rechecking will be done to see if the gap or space between the gums and tooth has reduced.**

SURGICAL TREATMENT:

- A surgical procedure (gum surgery) may need to be carried out to clean away bacteria and food particle deposits that are under the gums and on the root surfaces which cannot be entirely cleaned by routine scaling.

Different gum surgeries that may be done are: -

Flap surgery- for in-depth cleaning of deep gums infection.

Root coverage surgeries - For covering the roots that have become visible to save the tooth and improve overall appearance of the teeth.

FOLLOW UP:

-Regular follow up appointments are important to ensure that the gum infection does not insure to prevent further destruction of gums and supporting bone.

HOW ORAL HEALTH AFFECT OVERALL HEALTH

"Over the teeth, past the gums, look out body, here discases come!"

The mouth is referred to as a mirror of overall health, reinforcing the idea that oral health is an integral part of general health, let us look into the effects of poor dental hygiene on the body.

- **HEART DISEASE**

People with periodontal disease are 2 times likely to develop heart disease as a result of periodontal bacteria and plaque entering the bloodstream through the gums. They have an increased risk for heart attack and stroke, and a 25% greater chance of having coronary heart disease. Gums disease is associated with atherosclerosis and thickening of vessel walls. Oral bacteria may also interfere with the clotting process in the cardiovascular system.

- **RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS.**

Bacteria from gum disease can travel through the bloodstream to the lungs where it can aggravate pre-existing respiratory problems. Dental plaque build up creates a dangerous source of bacteria that can be inhaled into the lungs, leading to pneumonia and bronchitis.

- **UNCONTROLLED DIABETES.**

Long standing gum disease can disrupt diabetic control. Diabetes alters the pocket environment, contributing to bacterial overgrowth. Gum disease may worsen the blood sugar levels, which can increase the likelihood of serious complications such as heart and lung disease.

- **BRAIN DISEASE / STROKE.**

Gum disease may increase the risk of stroke. Research has shown that harmful bacteria in the mouth can make a person more susceptible to developing blood clots and eventually increase the chance of stroke.

- **PRETERM / LOW BIRTH WEIGHT BABIES.**

Women with advanced gum disease may be more likely to give birth to an underweight or preterm baby. Oral bacteria can cross the placental barrier exposing the fetus to infection. Gum disease may be a greater factor for preterm / low birth weight than smoking or alcohol use.

EFFECT OF ORAL HEALTH ON GENERAL HEALTH.

- ORAL DISEASE AND INFECTION:** They cause systemic infection that can threaten life, can be fatal. It also can lead to unsuccessful organ transplant causing delayed surgical healing.
- GUM DISEASE:** Affect diabetes, bacterial pneumonia, low birth weight, heart disease and stroke.
- TOOTH DECAY:** They are one of the important reason for malnutrition, and can cause pain, discomfort and loss of concentration leading to poor emotional health and psychological stresses.
- MALOCCLUSION / BADLY ALLIGNED TEETH:** Along with poor aesthetics, badly aligned teeth also cause difficulty in talking and chewing, they may lead to infection due to poor oral hygiene. They also impact the overall confidence of person in their appearance, leading to low self-esteem.

SOME FACTS ABOUT ORAL HEALTH AFFECTING GENERAL HEALTH.

- Gum diseases increase pancreatic and kidney cancer by 62%.
- Pregnant women with gum disease have only 1 in 7 chance of giving birth to a healthy child of normal size.
- People with gum disease are twice as likely to die from heart disease and thrice as likely to die from stroke.
- Research has found an association between gum disease and rheumatoid arthritis.
- Tooth loss and gum disease increase the risk of Alzheimer disease and Dementia.
- Diabetes and bleeding gums increase the risk of premature death.
- Women with gum disease have higher chance of breast cancer.
- Poor gum health and lack of regular brushing and flossing will cause halitosis or bad breath.

Dental Problems in Geriatrics and Management.

Aging is a natural process and this change has a major impact on the delivery of both oral and general health.

- **Oral health status in Elderly Patients**

Inadequate nutrition may contribute to physical and mental problems. The reduced functioning of salivary glands is commonly associated with ageing. The presence of saliva protects the oral cavity and its absence causes many oral health problems. The oral mucosa

becomes increasingly thin, increasing the susceptibility to various infections and decreased rate of wound healing.

- **Oral health problems in Geriatrics and their management**

1. Gum Problems

The common problems encountered are bleeding gums, pain on chewing, bad breath and receding gums. Teeth may become loose as the gums pull away from the teeth and become infected. If untreated, the infection reaches the bone and causes bone loss after which extraction will be the only solution.

Visit your dentist for various treatment options like deep cleaning. Your dentist may prescribe medications as a part of the treatment. He/She may recommend surgery including flap surgery or bone and tissue grafts.

2. Missing Teeth Problems

Almost 50% of the elderly patients above the age of 60-65 have lost all their teeth. Reduced saliva can lead to loss of denture retention and traumatic lesions, infections of the oral mucosa.

Appliances to restore lost teeth are removable and fixed appliances eg: Removable partial dentures, complete dentures and fixed appliances. Maintaining good oral hygiene by use of mouthwash and daily use of artificial salivary substitutes are important measures to reduce complications of denture wearing patients with reduced salivary secretion.

3. Decayed Teeth Problems

With ageing, decreased focus on oral health will lead to decreased time provided to the importance given to teeth and efforts to clean it. This causes sensitivity as a chief complaint. Lack of cleaning leads to accumulation of food debris and food particles on the tooth which increases risk of tooth decay. If the decay is not removed at the right time, the infection may reach deeper into the tooth and cause tooth pain thus requiring root canal treatment.

Patient must be educated about the proper maintenance of his oral hygiene.

To conclude, the elderly form a distinct group in terms of provision of oral health care and should be given special attention by the dentist.

What is an Implant?

A dental implant is used to support one or more artificial teeth to replace missing teeth. Implant is a screw that can replace the root of a tooth and is placed into the jawbone.

When Should I get an Implant?

When there are single or multiple missing teeth.

High esthetic demand.

And where removable appliances are not favourable.

When you don't want a bridge/don't want adjacent teeth cut.

When you can't give a dental bridge.

When should you not get an Implant done?

Implants will fail if you have, any disease or are undergoing medical therapy that hinders wound healing, pregnant woman, physically or mentally challenged patients or children under the age of 14 cannot undergo the implant procedure.

There are high chances of failure incase of alcoholism or smoking. If the area of treatment is exposed to radiation therapy within 5 years then placement of implant is not advised.

What are the advantages of Implants?

Dental implants are the best alternative to missing natural teeth as they look similar to natural teeth, are as strong and can last longer than any other dental replacements. There is also more preservation of the jaw bone and no damage to the neighbouring teeth. A securely attached implant can give you the confidence of eating what you normally like.

What are the disadvantages of Implants?

The drawbacks of implants are that they are expensive. A dental implant costs much more than a dental bridge or a denture. They require a surgery and sometimes complicated procedures may have to be done and are highly dependent on the doctor's experience and skill. They are susceptible to failure.

What happens during the Implant procedure?

Damaged tooth is removed and the jaw bone is prepared for implant surgery. Then the Dentist places the dental implant screw in your jaw bone. The bone needs to heal and adapt onto the implants and fuse to them. This usually takes a few months.

After which a natural looking bridge/cap is placed onto the Implant. Regular follow up is required after the procedure. Sometimes if the implant integrates favourably in the jawbone and is fixed inside the dentist may immediately place the temporary crown/Bridge thereby immediately replacing your missing teeth this is usually done to replace the front missing teeth.

Is the treatment Painful?

Most patients are pleasantly surprised as to how little pain is experienced after implant placement, You will not feel any pain at the time but, just like after an extraction, you may feel some discomfort during the week after the surgery, which can be easily managed by painkiller medication.

How long is the procedure?

Usually the false teeth are fixed 3 to 4 months after the implants are put in. Sometimes treatment takes longer and your dental team will be able to talk to you about your treatment time. When replacing front missing teeth the dentist may immediately give you a temporary crown and give a permanent one 4 to 6 months later after healing has taken place.

POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**A) AFTER EXTRACTION:**

1. For an hour after the tooth removed, you should place pressure on the gauze pack covering the extraction site. If bleeding continues, apply a new gauze and apply pressure for an additional 45 minutes.
- 2) Do not drink or eat hot, hard, sticky, spicy foods for at least 3-4 days.
- 3) Do not rinse your mouth or spit for next 2 days.
- 4) Do not use a straw to avoid pressure on blood clot.
- 5) Do not brush your teeth and the affected side for atleast 3-4 days.
- 6) Consume soft and cold food for 2-3 days.
- 7) Apply ice pack to the outside of the affected part of the jaw for 24 hours after extraction as it help in reducing swelling.

B) AFTER SCALING:

- 1) To help sooth the area, rinse your mouth 2-3 times a day.
- 2) Use a prescribed mouthwash.

- 3) Resume your home care regime of brushing and tongue cleaning twice a day.
- 4) Floss at least once a day.
- 5) Refrain from smoking for at least 24-48 hours after scaling.
- 6) Cessation of habit (tobacco chewing etc.) is a must.
- 7) Tobacco counselling will help for habit cessation.
- 8) You may take non aspirin pain killers for any tenderness or discomfort.
- 9) One can use desensitising toothpaste if sensitivity is experienced after scaling.
- 10) Visit the dentist for any persistent discomfort.

C) **AFTER ROOT CANAL TREATMENT**

- 1) Avoid eating hard or sticky food on the tooth being treated especially when temporary cement placed
- 2) Take medications as prescribed
- 3) Get your permanent filling done on schedule

- 4) Warm salt water gargles after every meal
- 5) Avoid blocking the open tooth with toothpicks etc.

D) **COMPLETE DENTURE**

- 1) Clean your denture after every meal
- 2) Rinse them under running water or mouthwash to remove food debris
- 3) Avoid using
 - Hot or boiling water as they can warp the denture
 - Toothpaste as they are often abrasive
 - Bleach or detergent
 - Other strong chemicals
- 4) Remove denture every night and soak them in water
- 5) Denture relining should be done after 2-3 years
- 6) Clean denture with soft brush and soap water or with tablets like CLINSODENT and cleansers like denturite powder

E) **AFTER CROWN AND BRIDGE**

- 1) Following the first appointment, a temporary crown bridge may be placed.

Hence, avoid eating hard food from the same side.

- 2) Avoid eating extremely hard and soft food or beverage for first few days.
- 3) If gums are tender, rinse with warm salt water.
- 4) If you feel that your bite is not proper, consult your dentist immediately.
- 5) Follow your oral hygiene routine properly -Brushing, tongue cleaning and flossing properly twice a day.
- 6) Get your teeth cleaned every 6 months examined and get an X-Ray done every year which will help to prolong your crowns and bridge.
- 7) Your tooth may feel sensitive to temperature, sweets or biting. This is normal and should subside in a few days. If it persists consult your dentist.
- 8) Do not eat anything sticky, hard or chewy as this may pull off your crowns or even break it.
- 9) Be careful while brushing and flossing adjacent to the temporary crown as this may cause it to be dislodged. Once the permanent restoration is places you may brush and floss normally.

10) Decrease your intake of sugar containing foods and drinks. This will increase the longevity of your new crowns. It will also reduce the chances of secondary decay in these crowns.

11) If your temporary/final restoration loosens call and visit dentist immediately for recementation.

12) If food gets stuck between the teeth remove it with flossing. If this problem still persists get it examined by your dentist. It may require a filling or even replacement with a new cap/crown.

DENTAL TREATMENT GUIDE

This is a general treatment guideline. Treatment plans may vary between individuals depending on the nature of dental problem & disease severity. This is not a substitute for individual dental specialist opinion.

1] If you have moderate to severe pain in teeth in the night or on eating hot food or while chewing, then the proposed treatment is root canal treatment or the teeth could be extracted.

2] If your tooth pain is moderate to severe and lasts for a few minutes to few hours or is relieved only on taking painkillers the treatment usually is root canal treatment or you can get the tooth extracted.

- 3] If the pain in your teeth lasts for few seconds and is mild then the proposed treatment is fillings in the teeth.
- 4] If your teeth pains on having anything cold the treatment you can undergo is either fillings or root canal treatment.
- 5] If you have a broken tooth the treatment can either be fillings and/or teeth capping. If the broken teeth pains then the treatment you could get done is root canal treatment or you can the tooth extracted as a last option.
- 6] If you have crooked teeth or mal aligned teeth, then the treatment you require is orthodontic braces.
- 7] If you have sensitivity in your teeth the cause needs to be identified and treated accordingly. Also you could use a desensitizer.
- 8] If you have bad breath, the treatment you should undergo is regular cleaning of tongue followed by teeth and you can start using mouthwashes. If you have systemic diseases a consultation with your physician may be required.
- 9] If you require replacement of your missing teeth the treatment options are removable partial denture or fixed partial dentures (crowns & bridges) or dental implants.
- 10] If you have mouth ulcers, it can usually be treated by using Vitamin B&C, Folic acid and mouth ulcer gel.

11] If you have spacing in between your teeth, you can get cosmetic fillings, laminates or veneers or you could also get braces treatment done.

12] If you have habits such as thumb sucking or if you breathe through your mouth, it can be treated using habit breaking appliances.

13] If you get hard deposits (tartar) on your teeth then the probable treatment is cleaning of your teeth.

14] When you have swelling of gums, the cause should be identified first. Treatment can either be scaling, gum drainage or gum surgery.

15] Due to extra pigmentation your gums turn black, the treatment done is depigmentation surgery to make them pink again. However this treatment results are temporary and may have to be repeated.

16] If you have yellow or discolored teeth it can be treated by scaling/ bleaching/ veneers and /or crowns.

17] If you have fluorosis the treatment you can get done is veneers/ laminates/ crowns.

18] If your teeth are mobile or are shaking, the treatment you undergo is splinting of the teeth or if mobility is severe you can get the tooth extracted.

19] If you are unable to open your mouth, the cause needs to be identified first and treated followed by prescription of antibiotics and muscle relaxants.

20] When your wisdom teeth are erupting and they are painful, get a X-Ray done. Use the prescribed antibiotics, analgesics for pain relief. The treatment can be removal of gums above the erupting teeth or it can be extracted.

21] If your teeth are decayed, the treatment is usually fillings. If the decayed teeth are painful then a root canal treatment is advised. In some cases the treatment can be extraction.

22] If you are unhappy with your smile, a smile designing procedure can be performed to make it correct and beautiful.

23] If you have short length of teeth or if you are unhappy with the small size of your teeth, the treatment you can get is crown lengthening procedure to increase the visible size of your teeth.

BAD BREATH AND ITS MANAGEMENT

Bad breath is an unpleasant and disturbing smell from the mouth

The various causes of bad breath are

- 1) Irregular and inadequate cleaning of the tongue surface leads to tongue coating and is the most important cause of an unpleasant smell from the mouth.**

- 2) Neglecting the need of using proper oral health aids leads to poor maintenance of oral hygiene.**
- 3) Improper brushing techniques results in incomplete removal of food debris.**
- 4) Smoking, chewing tobacco and its products causes oral malodor.**
- 5) Absence or reduced amounts of saliva causes dry mouth and encourages accumulation of food debris on the tongue, cheek and gums which leads to bad odour.**
- 6) Prolonged mouth breathing causes bad breath ,gum diseases and worsens other dental problems.**
- 7) Certain medicines like anti-allergy drugs and kidney medication can cause reduced salivary flow leading to dry mouth and bad breath.**
- 8) Gum infections, ulcers, abscesses can also cause bad breath.**
- 9) Digestive disorders such as acidity, indigestion can be a cause of oral malodor.**
- 10) Respiratory tract infection, uncontrolled diabetes, acute and chronic kidney diseases, liver diseases and sinusitis can also cause bad breath.**

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR?

If you feel you have bad breath then review your oral hygiene habits. Also try making lifestyle changes like brushing your teeth, cleaning the tongue twice a day, gargling after every meal, drink plenty of water and if still persists, then you need to consult a Doctor.

MANAGEMENT

- 1) Practice good oral hygiene, brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- 2) A proper brushing technique needs to be learnt, proper guidance and patient cooperation is the key.
- 3) Mouth rinses should be the part of oral hygiene regime as it helps eliminate bacteria from the mouth.
- 4) Tongue also harbors bacteria hence careful brushing of the tongue may reduce odour. It would be beneficial in using a tongue scraper or a toothbrush built in a tongue cleaner.
- 5) Floss at least once a day. It removes food particles and plaque from in between the teeth, helping you control bad breath.
- 6) Quit habit like Smoking and chewing Tobacco as it helps reduce bad breath and other oral diseases.
- 7) To avoid dry mouth, drink plenty of water to stimulate the salivary flow and also use sugar-free chewing gums.
- 8) Adjust your diet, avoiding onions and garlic that can cause bad breath. Eating a lot of sugary food is also linked with bad breath.
- 9) Consult your physician to treat the systemic conditions which in turn will help reduce oral malodor.

- 10) **Regular dental checkup should be scheduled. All indicated dental treatment should be completed to help effectively manage your bad breath.**

Hence, Bad breath is an extremely unappealing characteristic in the socio-cultural interactions and can be easily prevented with proper demonstration and guidance by the Dental professional with patient cooperation.

WHY INDIA HAS HIGH LEVELS OF ORAL AND GUM DISEASES?

India has such high levels of oral and gum diseases due to the following reasons:

- **Poverty restricts the common people to show interest in dental treatment and is not considered a priority**
- **Lack of knowledge and awareness decreases the importance of dental treatment**
- **Reaching out to the Public Health Centre becomes difficult and it may be inadequately stocked and lack resources**
- **Dental treatment is expensive**
- **Chewing tobacco and smoking is prevalent in India due to a lower socio-economic background and hence adds on to the disease burden**
- **People indulge in these habits to reduce stress**
- **People with diabetes are at a higher risk for oral health problems such as gum diseases because they are more susceptible to bacterial infections and have a decreased ability to fight bacteria**

- Majority of Indians consume a diet deficiency in vitamins and minerals. Vitamin C deficiency leads to bleeding gums and Vitamin B deficiency causes dry mouth

MANAGEMENT

- More dental camps needs to be conducted to educate the common people about oral hygiene maintenance and guide them about the correct brushing techniques and using oral health aids.
- Mass approach
 - 1) Television has a broad coverage to a very large number of people and hence can influence public opinion effectively.
 - 2) FM Radio also has a broad audience and is economical and easily accessible.
 - 3) Newspapers can be used to widely disseminate mass information.
 - 4) Documentary films provides realism and motion hence can be employed to spread useful dental knowledge.
 - 5) Posters gives explainable and pictorial information.
 - 6) Rural health exhibitions ensures personal communication hence should be conducted during fairs and festivals.
 - 7) Health magazines can provide information about various dental diseases, medicines and treatment options to manage the same.
 - 8) Internet: Today due to enhanced coverage there are a number of internet sites which serve to provide health education to communities at large.

To Conclude, India has a relatively higher incidence and prevalence of dental problems but it can be dealt with the above suggested measures in a more comprehensive and practical approach. The situation can be improved with appropriate planning of oral health policies and creating the necessary infrastructure to counter the increasing burden of oral disorders in India.

DIABETES AND ORAL HEALTH:

- People with poor diabetes control are more likely to develop problems in mouth.
- One of the most common symptom of diabetes is “Dry mouth”. You may have less saliva causing your mouth to feel dry. Because saliva protects your teeth you are also at a higher risk of cavities. So regular dental checkups are very important.
- People with diabetes may be at more risk of infection including severe gum disease. Gums may become swollen and bleed more often.
- Patients may experience delayed wound healing.
- Poor oral health can make diabetes control more difficult so it is important for people with diabetes to keep their mouth healthy.
- Control your blood sugar levels. Good blood sugar control will also help your body fight any fungal or bacterial infections in your mouth and help relieve dry mouth caused by diabetes.

- Patients wearing dentures are prone to fungal infections such as “Oral thrush”. So it is important for the patient to clean his/her denture daily.
- Brush your teeth thoroughly twice a day to remove bacterial plaque from teeth which helps prevent gum disease.
- Diabetes can lead to multiple periodontal abscess.
- Diabetes can cause moderate to severe bone loss which results in increased mobility of teeth.
- Flare up of infections is often seen in diabetic patients
- Severe untreated diabetes eventually results severe gum inflammation and foul odor.

PREGNANCY AND ORAL HEALTH:

- Firstly let your dentist know that you are pregnant.
- Hormonal changes during pregnancy can affect the gums making them more sensitive and reactive to bacteria and infections, thereby increasing the risk of swollen and severe gum disease.
- Pregnant women with moderate to severe gum disease may be more at risk to give birth to low-weight and premature babies.
- Vomiting in pregnancy can damage the surface of your teeth and cause tooth decay. Rinse your mouth with water or use a fluoride rinse afterwards.

- Existing gum disease in pregnancy can lead to bleeding gums and may worsen the chronic gum infection which eventually leads to tooth loss.
- “Pregnancy tumors” can occur. They are localized enlargements of gums which can bleed easily. This may require professional cleaning.
- Avoid X-rays while pregnancy. In case of dental emergency an X-ray may be necessary, in such case the dentist may shield your abdomen and thyroid with lead apron to protect your baby from exposure to radiation.
- Routine dental treatment during pregnancy is safe in second trimester.
- Tell your dentist about any gum problems. Switch to a softer toothbrush.
Use toothpaste that contains fluoride to help strengthen your teeth against decay.
- Treatments such as teeth whitening or other cosmetic procedures should be postponed till after pregnancy.
- Only emergency treatment is preferred in the first and third trimester.

MYTHS IN DENTISTRY

- 1. Using a hard toothbrush will clean my teeth better than a soft toothbrush.**
Using a hard toothbrush can result in wearing away of tooth and hence not recommended. A soft toothbrush when used properly will clean the teeth with less risk of loss of tooth surface.
- 2. Don't brush if your gums are bleeding.**
Gums bleed due to inflammation caused by presence of tartar on the tooth. You need to visit a dentist to get your teeth cleaned followed by brushing and flossing regularly which is the only way to make gums heal.
- 3. You can stop a toothache by putting an aspirin / clove oil on inflamed tooth.**
Aspirin cannot enter a tooth to relieve pain. Placing an aspirin will burn your gums. Clove oil can temporarily soothe your dental pain but will not treat it.
- 4. If there are no visible problems with my teeth, I don't need to see a dentist.**
You should always visit a dentist, twice a year for an examination and dental cleaning is a part of your dental preventive care.
- 5. Smoking cigarettes can make my teeth discoloured, but that's all.**
Smokers have more teeth decay than non-smokers, severe gum disease and a high risk of oral cancer.

6. Whiter teeth are healthier teeth.

The natural colour of teeth can vary from person to person. Whiter teeth don't necessarily mean a cleaner mouth. Yellow teeth can be healthy too. Signs of infection, decay can still be hidden between or underneath the teeth.

7. All wisdom teeth must be removed.

As long as the wisdom teeth can erupt and function correctly, they do not have to be removed.

8. All dental procedures must be avoided during pregnancy.

Second trimester is the safest for dental procedures. X-rays and long appointments should be avoided. Only emergency treatment is advisable in first and third trimester of pregnancy.

9. Removal of teeth affects the eyesight.

Vision is not affected in any way by dental treatment including removal of teeth. There is no connection between the teeth and the eye.

10. Cleaning weakens the teeth and makes the teeth loose.

Cleaning of teeth removes the tartar deposits. As the tartar deposits are removed from around the teeth and the gums, you may feel space/ gaps between the teeth. These spaces will be filled as the gums heal. Cleaning does not make the teeth loose as they were already loose due to tartar and gum disease. Cleaning will only make the loosening visible. Cleaning

doesn't weaken teeth, rather it makes them stronger and also improves gum health.

TIPS TO MAINTAIN ORAL HYGIENE

- 1. Brush your teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and replace your toothbrush every 3 months.**
- 2. Floss once daily to remove food particles that get caught in between teeth.**
- 3. Eat a balanced and fibrous diet and avoid in between meals and snacks.**
- 4. Use a tongue scraper to remove food deposits and bacteria present on the tongue surface which cause bad breath.**
- 5. Avoid excess sugar in food. Try to only indulge in sugary sweets occasionally and avoid carbonated soft drinks.**
- 6. Become tobacco free. Using tobacco products can stain your teeth and increase your risk of developing oral cancer.**
- 7. Rinse using an antiseptic mouthwash once daily to kill germs that cause cavities and gum disease.**
- 8. Beware of dry mouth. Dry mouth can be a side effect of many medications and can cause cavities. Drink at-least 10 – 12 glasses a day to keep yourself hydrated.**
- 9. Schedule regular dental check-ups for professional cleaning of teeth and oral check-ups.**

10. Visit your dentist every six months. Consult with your doctor for your dental health and problems.

Quit Tobacco Before it Kills You...

Do you smoke cigarettes/ cigars/ bidi or chew tobacco?

If so, you are putting not only your teeth, gums or mouth but also your overall health at risk too.

Tobacco products contain the highly habit forming addictive ingredient - Nicotine. Nicotine is a major cause of primary behavioral effects of tobacco. It is a poisonous substance leading to addiction. Intake of tobacco causes lung cancer, reduced body weight, severe cough, difficulty in swallowing, premature aging and wrinkles.

It even causes poor wound healing, increased blood pressure, due to which it leads to increased rate of heart failure. Oral effects include gum diseases, oral lesions like leukoplakia, tobacco pouch, and increased rate of dental decay. It leads to bad breath and tooth discoloration. It increases the accumulation of tartar on tooth and leads to bone loss followed by tooth loss.

Have you experienced any of these?

IF yes, then it is time to quit tobacco now. Save your life before it is too late...

Quit Tobacco Now. Save a Life

Quitting tobacco is not easy, but it can be done.

The most important factor in successfully quitting tobacco is self-control and personal commitment. We know quitting tobacco is hard and for many people it requires several attempts. Having a plan and getting support can make it easier to quit tobacco.

Ready to quit? Visit a dentist now!

While quitting tobacco is the most effective way to ensure better oral health, there are some tips that those who choose to quit tobacco should follow -

- Make a plan and set a quit date. This will help keep you prepared focused and motivated to quit.
- Tell your family and friends about your quit date and ask them for support.
- Drink lots of water and exercise or do walking.
- Have sugar free gums and mints available for the time cravings kicks in.
- At first, stay away from places where smoking might be taking place.
- Start using nicotine gums/ lozenges/ spray/ inhaler/ transdermal patches as substitutes.

- Use of nicotine should be restricted to 2 mg/ day. If it exceeds, it may cause nicotine toxicity.
- Visit tobacco cessation centers which are located all over India for proper guidance and support.
- When a strong craving hits, it can be easy to lose sight of the benefits of quitting. You might lose your focus, but there is no good reason to continue tobacco.