SUBJECTS COVERED:
- Fluoride: more harm than good?
- The role of diet in dental health
- Nutritional supplements for gum disease
- Eight ways to stop gum disease
- Herbal remedies for dry mouth
- Homeopathy
- References

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FLUORIDE: MORE HARM THAN GOOD? (1)

The issue of fluoridation has stirred up national controversy. American Dental Association claims that water fluoridation decreases cavities by 50 to 70 percent. Opponents of fluoridation cite dozens of studies that confirm its toxicity.

Both sides may be right. It's true that fluoride may help reduce the formation of bacterial acid in the mouth. However, research also shows that levels of one-half to one part per million of fluoride increases tumor growth in mice by 15 to 25 percent.

Fluoride has also been linked to diarrhea, muscular pains, joint pain, excessive thirst and urination, bouts of acute abdominal pain, skin rashes, progressive exhaustion, stomachaches, nausea, and vomiting.

Yale professor Dr. J.A. Albright reported that as little as one part per million of fluoride reduces bone strength and elasticity.

One problem is that the difference between a therapeutic dosage and a toxic dosage of fluoride is quite narrow. Furthermore, some individuals are more sensitive to fluoride than others.

THE ROLE OF DIET IN DENTAL HEALTH (2)

The single most effective method of protecting against tooth
decay and gum disease is thorough and consistent dental hygiene. The second most effective method is elimination of refined sugars from the diet.

Keep in mind that too much honey and fruit juice concentrates can also be hard on dental health. To protect your teeth and gums, avoid any sweets except fresh fruit in season.

In The Complete Encyclopedia of Natural Healing, author Gary Null, Ph.D., points out that all the refined foods in today's typical Western die-(especially sugar) fuel bacteria. At the same time, sugar lowers our defenses against bacteria, so they can spread.

A solid dietary foundation reduces the risk of dental problems. Dr. Null recommends whole, fresh foods and a high protein breakfast. He also recommends calcium rich foods to nourish strong teeth.

Raw fruits and vegetables are also essential, because they enhance enzyme functioning.

NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR GUM DISEASE (3)

Consult your dentist or periodontist about using the following dietary supplements to promote healthy gums and teeth:

Calcium is an essential mineral for strong, healthy cones and teeth. Magnesium works with calcium to nourish bones and teeth.

Coenzyme Q10 treats gum disease by increasing circulation of oxygen to the cells.

Garlic combats bacteria and fortifies the immune system.

Vitamin A helps fight infection. It is also critical for collagen synthesis.

B Vitamins help relieve stress, which has been implicated in gum disease.

Vitamin C helps heal bleeding, unhealthy gums. Vitamin C is an essential nutrient for healthy connective tissue. Zinc promotes healing, inhibits plaque growth, and helps stabilize membranes.

Flavonoids reduce inflammation and help stabilize collagen structures.

Vitamin E and Selenium protect the gums from free radical damage. Vitamin E also reduces wound healing time.

EIGHT WAYS TO STOP BLEEDING GUMS

Healthy gums are firm and springy. A change in normal color is one of the first signs of gum disease. A diet high in simple
carbohydrates and sugar, and low in nutrients, contributes to gum disease. So does the use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol.

Bleeding gums are often symptomatic of gum disease. Following are eight effective ways to treat them: Floss daily. Plaque buildup is a major culprit in gum disease. Brush properly after every meal to remove food particles. Consider using an electric toothbrush, which stimulates and cleans the gums.

Have your teeth professionally cleaned and checked regularly by a dental hygienist, dentist or periodontist. Mix a tablespoon of aloe vera with warm water to soothe and heal inflamed, bleeding gums. Use goldenseal in a toothpaste product to treat inflamed, diseased gums. (Contraindicated for pregnant and lactating women and children under age 2). Take 500 mg of vitamin C daily to nourish the gums. Use balsawood toothpicks to clean between the gums and teeth. Do not use regular toothpicks, which may damage delicate gum tissue.

HERBAL REMEDIES FOR DRY MOUTH (5)

An estimated 25 percent of older Americans suffer from dry mouth. Dry mouth is associated with aging, and is also a side effect of more than 400 common medications, including some prescribed for hypertension and depression.

Dry mouth is more than a minor annoyance. The salivary glands in the mouth help fight tooth decay by neutralizing the acid that germs produce. Saliva also helps prevent gum disease and mouth infections.

The following herbs have proven successful in stimulating salivation: Echinacea contains a saliva stimulating compound called Echinacea. Herbalist James A. Duke, Ph.D., recommends mixing a dropperful of Echinacea tincture in juice, or chewing the root of the fresh plant. Red pepper stimulates saliva, seat and tears. Add red pepper to food, or mix it with juice or tea. Multiflora rose is used in China to relieve dry mouth. Simmer two to four teaspoons of the dried flower per cup of boiling water. Evening primrose oil provides a wealth of gammalinolenic acid (GLA). GLA treats autoimmune disorders such as Sjogren's syndrome, which causes dry mouth.

Dr. Duke also points out that coffee, sugary beverages, alcohol, tobacco and salty foods can also exacerbate dry mouth. He recommends sipping water frequently.
**HOMEOPATHY (6)**

Homeopathy is not typically used to replace conventional dental care, but to complement it. The following remedies may help reduce dental pain and treat dental problems:

- For people who fear going to the dentist
- Aconite (monkshood)
- Gelsemium (yellow jasmine)
- Argenticum niticum (silver nitrate)
- Recommended for toothaches caused by dental abscess
- Belladonna (deadly nightshade)
- Mercurius (mercury)
- Hepar sulph (Hahnemann's calcium sulfur)
- Silicea (silica)
- Help relieve the pain and inflammation of wisdom teeth
- Salvia (sage) tincture mouthwash
- Recommended for extremely painful neuralgic toothaches
- Chamomilla (chamomile)
- For a toothache with radiating pains to the ears
- Plantago (plantain) is indicated
- Used to treat neuralgic pains after tooth extractions
- Hypericum (St. John’s Wort)
- Help control bleeding after extraction, surgery, or accidental dental trauma
- Arnica (mountain daisy)
- Treat pain after dental surgery
- Ruta (rue) is used

**REFERENCES**


7. Excerpts reprinted from Health Security Magazine

The information contained herein has been obtained from a variety of sources. This document is presented to increase awareness of the topic and educate the general public. It is not intended to be an extensive discussion of this subject, or to provide specific treatment guidelines.