

TOOTHFULLY. *speaking*



Dr. Preeti Desai

FATHER'S DAY! WHY IS ORAL HEALTH EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR MEN?

Men don't take care of their physical health and studies prove their oral health is equally ignored. Good oral health and keeping your teeth longer has been linked with longevity. And yet being male is one of the most common factors associated with infrequent dental checkups. Men are less likely than women to seek preventive dental care and often neglect their oral health for years visiting a dentist only when problems arise. Statistics show that on average, men brush their teeth 1.9 times a day and will lose 5.4 teeth by age 72 but if you smoke, you can lose 12 teeth by age 72!

Men are also more likely to develop oral and throat cancer. If you smoke or chew, you have a greater risk for gum disease and oral cancer. Men are affected twice as often as women, and 95 percent of oral cancers occur in those over 40 years of age.

The most frequent oral cancer sites are the tongue, the floor of the mouth, soft palate tissues in back of the tongue, lips and gums. If not diagnosed and treated in its early stages, oral cancer can spread, leading to chronic pain, loss of function, irreparable facial and oral disfigurement following surgery and even death. More than 8,000 people die each year from oral and pharyngeal diseases. If you use tobacco, it is important to see a dentist frequently for cleanings and to ensure your mouth remains healthy. Your general dentist can perform a thorough screening for oral cancer.

Why is periodontal disease a problem? I have talked at length in past columns regarding the connection between gum disease and cardiovascular disease, which can place people at risk for heart attacks and strokes (February 2013).

Medications? Since men are more likely to suffer from heart attacks, they are more likely to be on medications that can cause dry mouth. If you take medication for the heart or blood pressure or antidepressants, your salivary flow could be inhibited, increasing the risk for cavities. Saliva helps to reduce the cavity-causing bacteria found in your mouth.

Sports? If your men participate in sports, they have a greater potential for trauma to your mouth and teeth. If you play contact sports, such as football, soccer, basketball and even baseball, it is important to use a mouthguard, which is a flexible appliance made of plastic that protects teeth from trauma. If you ride bicycles or motorcycles, wear a helmet.

Tooth Loss Linked to Mind and Body Deterioration! Tooth loss is an early marker of mental and physical decline in older age, particularly among 60-74 year-olds," said Georgios Tsakos, professor at University College of London

Bad breath and bleeding gums are not sexy. Periodontitis is an inflammatory chronic infection of the gums, may hamper your sex life in another way: It may be a cause of erectile dysfunction - a 2011 study in Journal of Sexual Medicine suggests. Conditions such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes have also been linked with erectile dysfunction. Rats with periodontitis were studied to show they had less of an enzyme involved in achieving an erection, called eNOS. This enzyme produces nitric oxide, which relaxes blood vessels and increases blood flow to the penis. The inflammation produced by periodontitis may decrease nitric oxide, which then interferes with erection, the researchers said.

So... Many reasons to take care of all the fathers and men in our lives! If they don't take the initiative, we have to remind them of the importance of celebrating future Fathers' Days!



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