“Brushing Up on Oral Health”

MDCH Oral Health Program
Quarterly Newsletter
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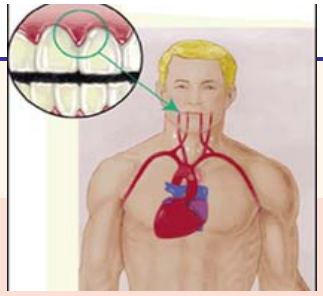
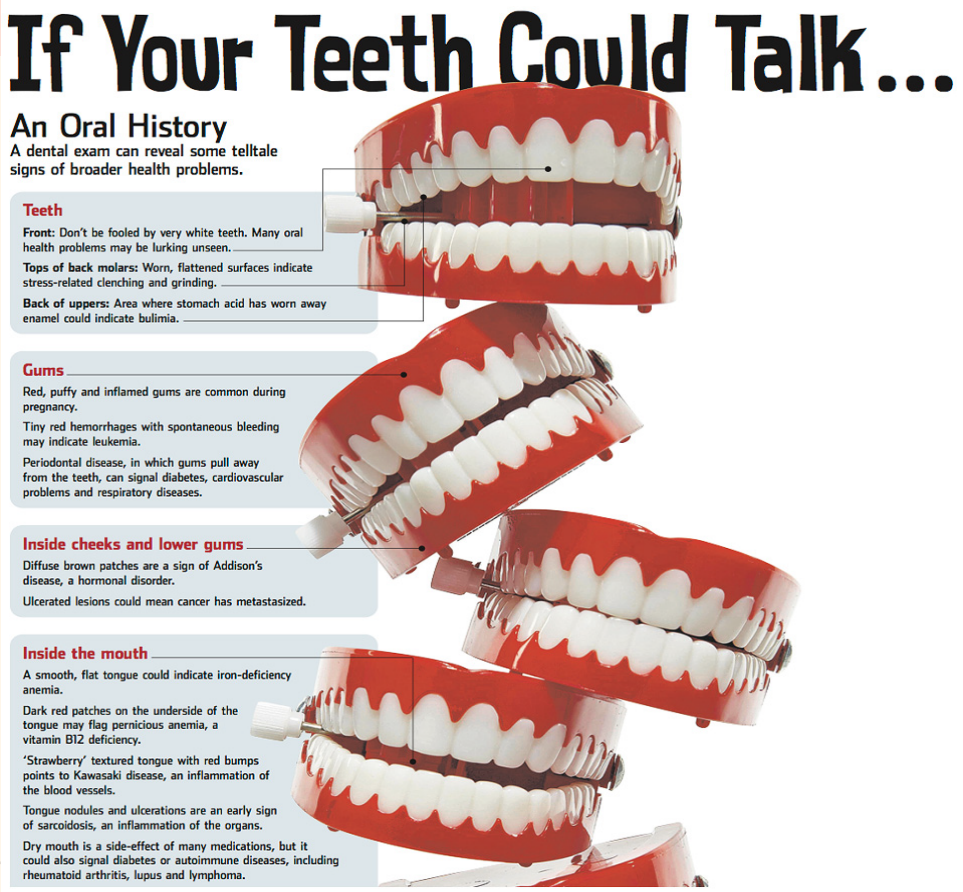


More in upcoming newsletters on the links of oral health and systemic conditions!

The Mouth Offers Clues to Disorders and Disease

The eyes may be the window to the soul, but the mouth provides an even better view of the body as a whole. Some of the earliest signs of diabetes, cancer, pregnancy complications, immune disorders, hormone imbalances and drug issues show up in the gums, teeth and tongue—sometimes long before a patient knows anything is wrong. There's also growing evidence that oral health problems, particularly gum disease, can harm a patient's general health as well, raising the risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, pneumonia and pregnancy complications (Beck, 2011).Retrieved from: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203686204577112893077146940.html



Beck, M. (2011, Dec 27). If your teeth could talk. *The Wall Street Journal.* Retrieved from: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203686204577112893077146940.html

Decaying Standards in Kids' Teeth The West Australian – January 19, 2012

The link between infant diet, tooth health, and obesity is under the microscope at a time when one in 10 Australian children who are age 5 have more than 7 rotting teeth. A joint Australian and US study by researchers will follow 1,035 infants from birth to age 3 to examine the tie between early childhood feeding (including breastfeeding and food and beverage intake), obesity, and dental health. The study will also monitor the children's physical activity as part of the broader research into dental decay and obesity, which have diet as a common risk factor. The study has been prompted partly by the fact that key messages for parents on how to ensure their children have healthy, white teeth are not sinking in (AAP, 2012).

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2012, February). *Children's oral health. Retrieved from:* http://www.aap.org/oralhealth/eNews.html

Prevention is the key!!

- **Early Dental Visits**
- **Fluoride**
- **Dental Sealants**

points of light

Visit www.pointsoflightonline.org for more on infant oral health and recommended age one dental visit!!

What are Dental Sealants?

Dental sealants are a plastic material placed on the pits and fissures of the chewing surfaces of teeth where up to 90 percent of decay occurs in school children.[1] Sealants prevent tooth decay by creating a barrier between the teeth and decay-causing bacteria. Sealants also stop cavities from growing and can prevent the need for expensive fillings. Sealants are 100 percent effective if they are fully retained on the tooth.[2] According to the Surgeon General's 2000 report on oral health, sealants have been shown to reduce decay by more than 70 percent.[3] The combination of sealants and fluoride has the potential to nearly eliminate tooth decay in school-aged children.[4] Sealants are most cost-effective when provided to children who are at highest risk for tooth decay.[5]

References:

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2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, 2000.
3. National Institutes of Health (NIH). Consensus Development Conference on Diagnosis and Management of Dental Caries Throughout Life. Bethesda, MD. March 26–28, 2001. Conference Papers. *Journal of Dental Education* 65 (2001): 935–1179.
4. Kim S, Lehman AM, Siegal MD, Lemeshow S. Statistical model for assessing the impact of targeted, school-based dental sealant programs on sealant prevalence among third graders in Ohio. *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* 63 (Summer 2003): 195–199.
5. Burt BA, Eklund SA. *Dentistry, Dental Practice, and the Community* (5th ed.). Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1999.

What is Fluoride Varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop cavities that have already started. The painted on fluoride varnish is sticky, so it attaches to the teeth easily and makes the outer layer (enamel) of the teeth harder, helping to prevent cavities.

Fluoride varnish is endorsed by the American Dental Association and is approved by the FDA. Fluoride varnish releases fluoride over several months, which strengthens the teeth and helps to prevent decay. Fluoride varnish can prevent new decay by 60% and arrest decay that has already started if applied early enough.

To maintain effectiveness, fluoride varnish should be applied every 3-4 months.

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Watch for our next Oral Health Newsletter coming in August!