



Oral Health and Brain Health

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Oral Health and Brain Health

- ▶ What is oral health
- ▶ Why is this important
- ▶ What is the relationship to systemic disease and dementia
- ▶ How do I prevent problems

What is oral health?

- ▶ Oral health is multi-faceted and includes the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey a range of emotions through facial expressions with confidence and without pain, discomfort and disease of the craniofacial complex. (According to the FDI World Dental Federation)
- ▶ Oral health is a human right, an integral part of general health and essential for overall wellbeing and quality of life (The Liverpool Declaration: Promoting Oral Health in the 21st Century. A call for action. September 2005)



And...

“One crucial and often neglected area of Healthy Ageing is oral health. Poor oral health can have a profound bearing on general health and well-being, for example, through its influence on nutrition. Moreover, the experience of pain, and problems with eating, chewing, smiling and communicating due to missing, discoloured or damaged teeth have a major impact on functional ability and older people’s daily lives.”

World Health Organization, World Report on Ageing and Health, 2015, Geneva.

What is oral disease?

- ▶ Periodontitis (gum disease): an infection which can lead to teeth getting loose and falling out
- ▶ Dental Caries (cavities): an infection which can cause teeth to decay and break
- ▶ Abscess: an infection which can lead to pain, swelling and sometimes much more

Why is oral health important?

- ▶ Improves overall well-being
 - ▶ Self esteem
 - ▶ Social interactions
- ▶ Improves general health
 - ▶ Reduced infection
 - ▶ Reduced Pain

Why is oral health important?

- ▶ Improves nutrition
 - ▶ Mouth is the gateway to our body
 - ▶ Dentition influences food selection
- ▶ Eating is a social activity
 - ▶ Poor dentition may be a source of embarrassment
 - ▶ Social isolation may impact cognition

Why is oral health important?

- ▶ Oral health can impact general health
- ▶ Dental care can have a positive impact on quality of life
- ▶ Infection in the mouth may be associated with disease in other parts of the body including the brain
- ▶ Recent studies link periodontal disease and dementia:
- ▶ Dental diseases can be prevented

Oral health and brain health

- ▶ Chronic periodontitis increases the risk of getting Alzheimer's disease
- ▶ Tooth loss and chewing efficiency is associated with dementia
- ▶ Oral infections with *Porphyromonas gingivalis* (Pg) in various mouse models has resulted in changes in the brain seen in Alzheimer's disease
- ▶ Oral bacteria can cause inflammation in the brain which can affect memory
- ▶ Controlling oral bacteria and improving chewing may decrease dementia

How to prevent dental problems

- ▶ Brushing for a minimum of 2 minutes twice a day with a toothpaste containing fluoride
- ▶ Clean between the teeth every day
- ▶ Remove dentures every night
 - ▶ Place in water or denture cleanser
 - ▶ Clean with mild dishwashing soap, not toothpaste
 - ▶ Dentures may need to be adjusted, relined, or remade
- ▶ Limit foods that contain high sugar content
- ▶ Routine dental visits to maintain oral health

How to prevent dental problems for individuals with dementia

- ▶ Attempt mouth care every day
 - ▶ even if it was refused in the past
 - ▶ each day is a new day
- ▶ If the individual can do their own mouth care, remind them each day
- ▶ Use a fluoride containing toothpaste
 - ▶ exposure to fluoride is the single most cost-effective measure to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health

How to prevent dental problems for individuals with dementia

- ▶ Stand in front of the person for brushing
 - ▶ have supplies ready
 - ▶ do not force mouth open
- ▶ Use a toothbrush
 - ▶ Do not use sponges, fingers or toothettes
- ▶ Brushing some teeth is better than none
 - ▶ chewing on the toothbrush is ok
- ▶ Stay calm and invest time for better dividends



What Should I Be Concerned About

Dry Mouth

- ▶ Increased risk for cavities
- ▶ Increased risk for oral infections
- ▶ Difficulty with speech
- ▶ Difficulty with eating
- ▶ Difficulty with dentures
- ▶ It is uncomfortable
- ▶ Usually from medication side effects and not due to normal aging

Managing dry mouth

- ▶ Sip on water
- ▶ Saliva substitutes
- ▶ Oral lubricants
- ▶ Sugar free or xylitol sweetened mints or gum
- ▶ Medications
- ▶ Acupuncture
- ▶ Alcohol free mouthwash
- ▶ Fluoride

What else should I be concerned about

- ▶ Sores that do not heal
- ▶ Swellings
- ▶ Red areas
- ▶ White areas
- ▶ White patches that wipe off and bleed
- ▶ Tingling or numbness
- ▶ Dark spots on teeth
- ▶ Loose teeth

Tooth trivia

- ▶ The mouth is part of the body
- ▶ You do not lose teeth because you get older
- ▶ Gums do not recede with age
- ▶ Teeth darken with age
- ▶ Teeth become less sensitive with age
- ▶ People without teeth still need oral examinations
- ▶ Fluoride is not just for kids

What Should I Remember:

The mouth is part of the body

So

Disease in the mouth may influence disease in other parts of the body and impact the general health and overall well being of an individual.

And

Preventing dental disease can help maintain general health and positively impact quality of life.



**A Healthy Smile is
Ageless!**

Questions?

**We don't stop playing because
we grow old; we grow old
because we stop playing.**

George Bernard Shaw

