

Oral health is key to overall well-being

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Everybody wants a nice smile and clean teeth. But there's a great deal more than that at stake in the health of your mouth.

Local dentists point out that what is going on in our mouth impacts our overall health and well-being. Studies are increasingly showing connections between oral health and serious health concerns. And what is going on in the rest of our body can also be reflected in our oral health.

"Your oral cavity is the gateway to the rest of your body," said Amy Remick, office manager at Gilmore Dental. "There are no fences in your body."

Dr. Denise Hicks of Central Oregon Dental Esthetics notes that inflammation in the mouth is linked to cardiovascular disease, arthritis and possibly even Alzheimer's disease.

"Getting that (the mouth) healthy helps with everything else," she said.

Discoloration in the gums, pain, swelling, a bad taste in the mouth and bleeding are all signs of compromised oral health and need attention from a dentist.

Dr. Trevor Frideres of Sisters Dental told *The Nugget* that the body can

become "preoccupied" with fighting small infections in the mouth, compromising the immune system and the possibility that bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream. He notes that science points to the possibility that people with periodontal disease (an infection of the tissues that hold your teeth in place) have higher incidences of the kinds of systemic problems cited above.

The connection between oral health and well-being starts in the womb, Dr. Frideres notes. Mothers with periodontal disease tend to have higher rates of low birth-weight and/or pre-term babies.

The oral health of children is set quite early, too, Dr. Frideres says.

From birth to age two, "children pick up bacteria from whoever they are around most," he told *The Nugget*.

Good bacteria, bad bacteria, inert bacteria – it's all set right there at the beginning.

"That's what you're going to have for the rest of your life," Dr. Frideres said.

That puts a premium on good oral health for parents, grandparents and caregivers, because it's not just their own health at stake, but also that of a child.

Dr. Kaitlyn Traynor of Advantage Dental in Sisters notes that the equation operates in the other direction, too. Sometimes conditions as serious as HIV infection and hepatitis can be detected through the condition of a person's mouth before they are otherwise diagnosed.

And people with chronic conditions may need to pay extra attention to their oral health.

"Patients who have Type 2 diabetes or who are on a bunch of different medications — that can affect their oral health," she said.

Maintaining good oral health is relatively straightforward. Regular checkups and cleaning are critical, as is good dental hygiene at home — brushing and flossing. Taking time and paying attention to oral hygiene and health is important: There's more at stake than your smile.



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Meditation offers benefits for well-being

By Kema Clark | Correspondent

Meditation. It works.

Many people practice meditation and know that it improves their lives mentally and physically. But a lot more people have never tried it and don't understand how it can help them.

It won't cost you a lot of money, you can try it on your own time, and you don't need to be part of group. When you discover it makes you feel happier, decreases your stress, and helps you relax, you will know it was time well spent.

Start simple. You don't have to go to a class. You don't have to have an instructor in front of you. You can try it in your backyard, living room, or your car or truck.

Meditation can help you move all that worry and stress out of your mind and bring in the good thoughts that calm you and decrease your anxiety.

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Central Oregon Dental Esthetics

Newly open in Redmond, Central Oregon Dental Esthetics is taking patients for general family dentistry for people of all ages.

Dental health is crucial to overall well-being, yet going to the dentist is something a lot of us avoid. Dr. Denise Hicks hails from Sisters and has long experience working with patients here who appreciate her focus on creating a welcoming, relaxing environment for what can be an anxiety-producing experience.

For those whose anxiety is acute, in-office sedation is available, easing the process completely.

Central Oregon Dental Esthetics uses the most up-to-date software and imaging systems to make dental work go as quickly and efficiently as possible.

From cleanings and checkups to cosmetic procedures, Central Oregon Dental Esthetics offers top-quality services and progressive care that make it easy to take care of this vital aspect of your health.

Now Open!
Dr. Hicks is proud to announce the opening of **Central Oregon Dental Esthetics**

Who we are:
A new practice in Redmond offering full-service dental care from youngest to oldest. **Coming soon:** Botox treatment for TMJ and more!

Why choose us:
We are an experienced, caring and thoughtful staff. We offer a comfortable, relaxed environment and state-of-the-art equipment.

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