



## Tooth Talk

by Dr. Grayson A. Pierson, DDS



### Answers to Frequently Asked Dental Questions

#### What causes bad breath and what can be done about it?

Bad breath, or halitosis, is primarily caused by poor oral hygiene, but also can be caused by retained food particles, gum disease, drainage from sinus dripping, or respiratory or gastrointestinal problems. Proper brushing, including brushing the tongue, cheeks, and roof of mouth, will remove bacteria and food particles. Flossing removes accumulated bacteria, plaque and food that is trapped between teeth. Mouth rinses are effective for temporary relief of bad breath.

#### Why should I floss?

Flossing is the one most important step in oral care that people forget to do or claim they don't have time for. By flossing your teeth daily, you increase the chance of keeping your teeth for a lifetime and decrease your chance of having periodontal or gum disease. Flossing cleans away the plaque from between your teeth, decreases the chance of interproximal decay, and increases blood circulation in the gums.

#### My gums bleed when I brush or floss. What does that mean?

Bleeding gums is an early indicator of gingivitis, or swollen gums. If this condition is left untreated, it can develop into periodontal or gum disease. Flossing and brushing several times a day can bring this condition under control. By continuing proper brushing techniques and flossing, you can reverse gingivitis within two to three weeks.

#### How long should I brush my teeth?

You should brush your teeth at least 2-3 minutes **twice** a day. Brush your teeth for the length of a song on the radio, the right amount of time to get the best results from brushing. Unfortunately, most Americans brush for only 45-60 seconds twice a day.

#### When I cannot brush my teeth, is there anything that I can do to slow down acid production?

Rinse your mouth with water after a meal or snack to neutralize acids and reduce bacteria by 30 percent. You can also wipe your teeth with a napkin as a temporary measure until you can use your toothbrush.

#### What can I do about sensitive teeth?

You can reduce tooth sensitivity by using a desensitizing toothpaste, having your dentist apply sealants and other desensitizing ionization and filling materials including fluoride, and decreasing the intake of acid-containing foods. Tarter control toothpaste will sometimes cause teeth to be sensitive as well as drinking diet soft drinks throughout the day.

#### What types of foods are bad for my teeth?

Foods that are sticky, such as dried fruit, fruit juice and candy, contain high amounts of sugar, requiring a longer time for the saliva to neutralize and remove these foods from the tooth surface. Foods that are good and healthy for the body are generally good and healthy for your teeth. Look for foods that are high in fiber and increase saliva production, such as apples. These foods tend to cleanse the teeth.

## Diabetes Day

Diabetes Day is the last Thursday of each month. It's a chance for diabetic patients to receive medical care. Dr. Prins, a foot specialist, offers additional services on that day. Medical, lab, optometry, and dental services also are available.

Upcoming Diabetes Days  
Feb. 24 and March 30  
Call the clinic for your appointment  
541-444-1030

## Use Safe Sleep Clothes

Most fatal fires happen between midnight and 6 a.m., when children are in bed. Teach children to get below the smoke if there is a fire. If they are in bed, they should roll out and crawl to the door. They should cover their noses and mouths with a cloth, such as a pillowcase or favorite blanket. Move quickly to a safe meeting place outdoors.

Did you know that tight-fitting sleep clothes are safer in fires than loose-fitting sleep clothes? Buy flame-resistant and snug-fitting sleep clothes with wrist and ankle cuffs to help keep out fire and smoke. Children should not sleep in oversized T-shirts or bathrobes.

## Medication Refills

Please use the pharmacy's 24-hour refill line to request your medicine - 444-9624. When you notice your medicine is getting low, call in your refill request. You can even do this in the middle of the night or on weekends. The machine is on at all times.

Be sure to allow 72 hours (three days) for your refills. Many prescriptions need your doctor's approval for refill. If your doctor works part-time, this may mean extra time is needed. You do not need to call again. If you allow three days, your medicine will be ready