



Tooth Talk

by Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

Words for a Lifetime of Smiles

National Dental Hygiene Month – Each year the dental hygiene profession steps up its efforts to increase public awareness. The fact that cavities and periodontal disease are largely preventable with regular dental hygiene care is this year's message. The motto is "A Healthy Smile Lasts A Lifetime"¹ and health begins with the first tooth.

Why the first tooth? Cavities can infect the teeth of 1- to 2-year-olds, infants. These cavities can be painful and weaken teeth to the point of crumbling. Broken teeth interfere with speech development and a confident smile.

Tribal dental staff has been working with pregnant women and infants. We provide prevention and treatment services, fluoride treatments and home care supplies. A good time to bring your baby into the dental clinic could be the same time as your well-baby checks.

If you are pregnant, a mother- or a father-to-be, please call the clinic, 541-444-1030 or 1-800-648-0449, to schedule a checkup and a cleaning. Your oral health can increase healthy smiles for your children.

Prevention is a good message to get to everyone. Tell your family and friends.

International Health Literacy Month – The motto of Health Literacy is, "Finding the Right Words for Better Health."²

This year I would like to focus on non-prescribed remedies that range from putting aloe on minor skin infections to taking herbals or antioxidants.

Numerous studies have shown that very few patients ever discuss these remedies with their health care providers. At health history review time, we ask you about over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, vitamins, and herbals. We also ask what tools you use to keep your teeth clean.

It's important for health care providers to know about all treatments, prescribed or not, our patients are using. There are a couple of reasons for us to know this.

The first is the potential for possibly serious interactions or harm. The second is to talk with patients about additional therapies that could supplement the traditional therapies.³

The first concern, harm, brings to mind an old practice of placing aspirin directly onto the gum of an aching tooth. The danger with aspirin is a burning painful sore that develops right on the gum tissue where it is placed. In addition, little (some is swallowed) or no aspirin gets to the source of the pain – the nerve inside the tissues.

Another concern is that certain vitamins (i.e., vitamin C) and OTC (aspirin and some non-aspirin analgesics) increase clotting time. Some foods can negatively affect clotting time when people are on prescribed medications to "thin" their blood (or increase clot-

ting time), done to prevent strokes or a clot inside a lung or limb.

The second reason, supplementing current therapies, is that in medical and dental there are tools and activities that can be helpful to health. My favorite is when patients share with me steps or tools they use to achieve oral health.

For example, gum and candy. What? How could a hygienist ever recommend these products for oral health care!

We do recommend these products if they contain Xylitol as the first ingredient – gum/toothpaste/lozenges. Xylitol helps reduce the risk of cavities, used for five minutes five times per day.

People who have dry mouth also have an increased rate of cavities. So we explain the benefits of Xylitol for patients with dry mouth. These same patients have been returning to the clinic telling me that these Xylitol-containing products have reduced their symptoms of dry mouth. This information I then share with you.

These two celebrations are a great pairing. Dental hygienists and health care providers in general want the same thing – Finding the Right Words for "your" Better Health, which can lead to A Healthy Smile (That) Lasts a Lifetime.

- 1 www.adha.org/
- 2 www.healthliteracy.com
- 3 *In Other Words . . . Talking with Patients about Integrative Therapies* by Helen Osborne, M.Ed., OTR/L



Enter Contest to Name New Exercise Facility

The Siletz Exercise Facility is becoming a reality. The building is being built and the site is being prepped.

We expect it to be ready for use in early- to mid-November. Now, it needs a name.

Please submit ideas for names to Cindy Urbach at 541-444-9633 or 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1633; or e-mail to siletzpac@yahoo.com, by Oct. 31. In

case of duplicate entries, only the first submission will be accepted.

Members of the facility task force will make a selection from submitted entries. The name will be announced at the grand opening.

The person submitting the winning name will receive \$30 in Nike products purchased through the Nike Web site (value of \$60).

Siletz Community Cancer Support Group



Time: 12:00-1:00 pm

Location: Siletz Library Community Room

Day: Third Tuesday of Month
Oct. 16th
Nov. 20th
Dec. 18th

Who: Community members are invited to attend whom are affected directly or indirectly with cancer. Cancer patients, survivors, family members, support people and care providers are encouraged to attend.

Contact: Sandra Hahn & DeAnna Pearl
Cancer Navigator Program
Siletz Community Health Clinic
(541) 444-9627 or (541) 444-9659

Fourth Annual Siletz Tribal Youth Conference

This year's conference will be held Nov. 11-12 on the Oregon Coast near Neskowin at the beautiful West Wind Lodge. The lodge is located on original Siletz Reservation allotment land at the mouth of the Salmon River.

The conference is being organized and run by staff from the Culture, Education, and Health programs. Chaperones from each area will assist youth and conference staff with running the event.

We expect 50 youth to be in attendance. The conference is designed for youth in seventh through 12th grade.

Youth and their parents are asked to complete a survey as a part of the

registration process. The survey questions are a tool to help parents, youth and staff develop expectations for the conference curriculum and experience. Staff is available in Siletz and each of the area offices to assist youth and parents with the survey.

The curriculum and activities for this year's conference are still under development. There will be workshops and presentations on tribal culture, history, education options and resources. There will also be experiential workshops and activities designed to bring youth together and further develop good relationships with each other and with tribal staff.

Registrations will be mailed out using available addresses through tribal

enrollment. They also will be available in each of the area offices and in Siletz. Contact staff for each area is as follows:

Eugene: Adrienne Crooks and Nick Sixkiller, 541-484-4234
Portland: Katy Kaady, 503-238-1512
Salem: Norma Jimenez and Sonya Moody-Jurado, 503-390-9494
Siletz: Delina John, 1-800-600-5599 or 541-444-8286; and DeAnna Pearl, 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1659, or 541-444-9659

For more information on the location, go to www.westwind.org/introduction.html.