

CRITICAL RESEARCH Innovations that are changing dentistry. **p05**

DENTIST JITTERS? Technology makes dental visits a breeze. **p07**

THROW YOUR DOG A BONE Learn why your pet's mouth matters. **p08**

ORAL HEALTH

PERSONALHEALTHNEWS.CA

René Angélil lost his battle with oral cancer, but his leadership in creating awareness lives on among Canadians.

April is
**Oral Health
Awareness
Month**

"In my experience with cancer, I was one of the lucky ones," René Angélil said, standing before the World Cancer Congress in Montréal in 2012. "Diagnosed and treated by a qualified team of professionals, I benefitted from the advancements in cancer research."

He was referring to his battle with throat cancer in 1999, which, after "a batter of invasive, sometimes painful procedures," including 38 rounds of radiation and chemotherapy, doctors declared was in remission.

Only seven months after Angélil's speech, in April 2013, the world learned his cancer had returned. He underwent emergency surgery to remove a tumour from his throat later that year. Despite the best efforts of his doctors, the cancer progressed and spread to other parts of his body.

The Montréal-born impresario, best-known for managing the ca-

reer of his wife Céline Dion, died this past January, leaving behind six children and a grieving family.

Angélil's efforts

In life, Angélil was a true humanitarian. He was a loving husband and father, a pioneer of the Canadian music industry, and a leader in the cancer research community — where he acted as a major source of hope for patients with head and neck cancer.

Indeed, spurred by his comeback from cancer in the late-90s, Angélil devoted himself to supporting cancer research, funding numerous charities including the CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation, and helping to establish the very first oral cancer research chair at the Université de Montréal.

"Fighting cancer is challenging. If my participation in this chair can encourage those who have it to fight, then I have raised my bet."

"Fighting cancer is challenging. If my participation in this chair can encourage those who have it to fight, then I have raised my bet," Angélil said.

Prevalence in Canada

Many are not aware of the risk, but oral cancer is a devastating and often deadly disease that affects more and more people each year.

Close to 5,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with oral cancer this year, according to the Canadian Cancer Society. It will cause more than 1,200 deaths, killing roughly 1 person every 8 hours. Of those 5,000 newly diagnosed individuals, only slightly more than half will be alive in 5 years.

If caught early, patient survival rates can be relatively high. Cur-

rently, however, oral cancer is often identified late and is usually at an advanced stage by the time it's noticed by either patients or medical professionals.

Recognized for his work

Angélil was recognized in late-2012 by the Order of Canada for his efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of oral cancer. He hoped that through his work Canadians would be more prudent in avoiding certain risk factors, such as smoking and unhealthy diet, and get themselves screened more frequently.

Despite his untimely death, his dedication to fighting oral cancer lives on in the message he shared: "There is still so much work ahead of us. I thank you all for your perseverance, leadership, and dedication to this global fight." ●

Benjamin Chacon

Dental Hygienists...

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A visit with your dental hygienist today can protect your health for tomorrow. Dental hygienists are your partners in prevention, encouraging you to brush, floss and rinse to protect your oral and overall health.

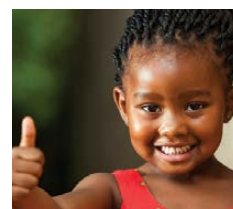


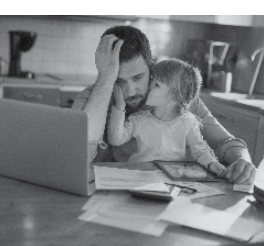
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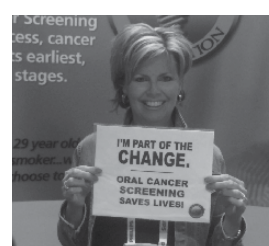
Alternative payment methods allow everyone to afford the dental care they need.

p04

**Your Baby's Mouth**

Make sure your child's teeth are a priority in their first year.

p05

**Let's Talk Sex**

Why the link between HPV and oral cancer is a growing concern.

p07

Good Oral Health Habits are an Essential Part of Our Daily Lives

"Research demonstrates that poor oral health can contribute to other health issues, such as diabetes, respiratory diseases, heart disease, and premature low birth weights in babies."



The oral health of Canadians has improved over the last decade. However, oral diseases, such as tooth decay and gum diseases, remain among the most common and widespread diseases in Canada and worldwide. The burden of oral diseases disproportionately affects vulnerable populations such as the elderly, low income, adolescents, Indigenous people (rural or isolated), new Canadians, and the mentally or physically challenged.

Common risk factors

We know that many diseases are interrelated. Therefore, it is important

for health professionals to work together to tackle shared risk factors, especially those that are preventable. According to the World Health Organization, "Oral diseases share common risk factors with the four leading chronic diseases — cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes." Common risk factors include poor oral hygiene, an unhealthy diet, particularly those high in added sugars, smoking, and alcohol abuse.

Research demonstrates that poor oral health can contribute to other health issues, such as: diabetes, respiratory diseases, heart disease, and premature low birth weights in babies. Moreover, oral signs and symptoms can be a precursor of

other diseases including lupus, anemia, HIV, or even bulimia/anorexia.

In 2015, at least 4,400 new cases of oral cancer were diagnosed across Canada. The mortality rate associated with oral cancer is still fairly high because too often the cancer is discovered and diagnosed late in its development. Men are twice as likely to be affected as women. The good news is oral cancer is treatable if detected early.

Working together

Oral health can have a significant impact on overall health and well-being. That is why it is so important for health care professionals to work together to find new and improved ways to address oral health issues and promote healthy habits.

However, it should not stop there. All of us — as individuals, parents, educators, and communities — have a role to play in promoting good oral

health habits. Simple actions such as regular check-ups with an oral health professional, drinking fluoridated water, reducing the daily intake of sugars, daily brushing and flossing will minimize the risk of oral health problems and improve our overall health. **o**

*Dr. Martin Chartier,
Acting Chief Dental Officer, Public Health Agency of Canada*



Poor oral health can result in pain, affect quality of life, and reduce school and work productivity.

Research Connects Inflammation to a Host of Serious Illnesses

What do your gums, your heart, your brain, and cancer have in common?

More than you think, according to researchers at the University of Alberta's School of Dentistry. Inflammation plays a key role in the body's immune response and it is the focus of some important research going on at the school.

Uncovering the links of inflammation

Researchers are working to uncover the link between periodontal disease and atherosclerosis, a cardiovascular disease characterized by the thickening of artery walls in response to accumulation of fat-loaded white blood cells. The epidemiological connection has been present in the literature for more than 20 years. "If you were to look at people that had severe periodontal disease, they often had bad cardiovascular disease," says Maria Febbraio, a researcher at the school. "We're studying how the bacteria interacts with the cell to promote inflammation because it's this inflammation that can cause oral

bone loss and the bad things about the disease."

Periodontal disease often affects other diseases as well, including diabetes. Patients with both diseases often have a much higher rate of cardiovascular disease than healthy patients. Researchers are studying the link between periodontal disease and the role it plays in causing or worsening other medical conditions. "Prevention, early detection, and proper treatment of periodontal diseases should be a priority not only for saving teeth but also for promoting general health" says Dr. Liran Levin, the Division Head of Periodontology.

When inflammation attacks nerves

Gum disease and atherosclerosis are caused by chronic inflammation, as are many other long term chronic diseases such as Parkinson's disease and cancer. Researchers at the University of Alberta are working to find the link between inflammation and these chronic diseases as well. "Acute inflammation is good and it relieves



Dr. Patrick Flood
Associate Chair, Research and Graduate Studies,
University of Alberta

the body of infections. But, when it turns into chronic inflammation, it can result in degeneration of many tissues, including gums, heart tissue, joints, and nerves. "When inflammation attacks nerves, it can cause a number of different chronic degenerative diseases in the central nervous system," says Dr. Patrick Flood. "Researchers here are looking at develop-

ing therapeutics targeting inflammation that prohibits the progression of diseases such as Parkinson's disease." Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's. Research shows that inflammation is a key player in causing the disease and a prime target for therapeutic relief. Researchers have found that selected anti-inflammatory treatments can relieve symptoms and half the progression of Parkinson's in animal models, and are working to bring these therapies to clinical treatment patients.

Inflammation and cancer

Conversely, inflammation also plays a critical role in the progression of cancer, but often there is not enough inflammation to destroy the cancer cells. Researchers within the School of Dentistry are working with investigators from the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Department of Medicine to identify and develop drugs that can enhance inflammation within cancer cells, leading to the destruction of

these cancer cells.

These drugs are being screened to enhance certain specific components of inflammation, namely cytotoxic T cells, which normally seek out and destroy cancer cells. In most cancer patients, however, the cancer itself suppresses the activity of these cytotoxic T cells — making them unable to stop the actively growing cancer. Shokrollah Elahi, a researcher at the school, is investigating a new panel of highly promising therapeutics specifically designed to prevent cancer cells from inactivating these cytotoxic T cells, thereby allowing these cells to recognize and kill cancer cells. Discovery of new and more effective therapies that increase inflammatory responses against cancer can benefit not only those with oral cancer, but other types of cancer as well. **o**

*Dr. Patrick Flood, Associate Chair,
Research and Graduate Studies,
University of Alberta*

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Breaking Bad Habits

Donna Scott, President of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association, **debunks common oral health myths**, and provides simple tips to maintain a healthy mouth.



Donna Scott
President, Canadian Dental Hygienists Association



FALSE
If my teeth look great and I feel no pain, then they are healthy

Prevention is key in maintaining a healthy mouth for life, and regular dental hygiene care is important in the early detection of gingivitis, periodontal (gum) disease, and caries (cavities). Often by the time there is pain, advanced disease is present. Early detection of gingivitis, periodontal disease, and caries is important to minimizing lengthy and costly treatments.

FALSE
My oral health does not affect my overall health

Taking good care of your mouth does more than ensure a bright white smile. A growing body of scientific evidence shows that a healthy mouth contributes to a healthy body. Chronic gum infection is associated with the development of cardiovascular problems such as heart disease, blockages of blood vessels, and strokes; periodontal disease is associated with rheumatoid arthritis. Improvements in oral care that result in a reduction of inflammation enable diabetics to maintain consistent blood sugar levels.

FALSE
Bad breath is caused by being a bad brusher

Halitosis (bad breath) may be a result of poor dental health habits; however, bad breath may also be a sign of other health problems. Poor dental health habits allow bacteria to flourish in the mouth — gingivitis, caries, and periodontal disease all contribute to bad breath. Bad breath may also be the result of vapours created by the lungs after eating certain foods, xerostomia (dry mouth), and other medical conditions such as respiratory tract infections, diabetes, liver, and kidney problems.

FALSE
Bleaching your teeth is dangerous

There are many options for brightening up a smile. Side effects are not common. Sometimes there will be an increase in sensitivity during the period of bleaching, which you may wish to discuss with your oral health care provider. To keep your smile safe, arrange for a full oral exam to determine if there is any untreated disease.

FALSE
Gum disease and gingivitis are normal and unavoidable

Gingivitis and gum disease are preventable. Gingivitis is an inflammatory response of the gums to bacterial infection and is a condition that can be reversed with improved home care. Gum disease, or periodontal disease, is a non-reversible disease that destroys and affects the supporting tissues, including the bone. Maintaining a healthy mouth throughout one's life is normal and possible.

FALSE
Blood in the sink while brushing is normal

During regular brushing, blood in the sink or a pink toothbrush indicates the presence of inflammation. A dental hygienist can provide professional dental hygiene care, including developing a personal home care program that will enable us all to maintain healthy gums and teeth.

FALSE
Mouthwash is a good substitute for flossing

Flossing maintains the area between the teeth and prevents cavities. While mouthwashes have been shown to reduce bleeding and inflammation in the tissues throughout the oral cavity, the mechanical removal of bacteria and food debris between the teeth is important to maintaining a healthy mouth. See your dental hygienist to learn more about interdental brushes and other cleaning aids.

FALSE
Oral cancer is caused only from smoking and drinking

Tobacco use is the single most important and preventable cause of oral cancer. Other lifestyle and environmental factors that have been identified as risk factors include alcohol consumption, UV rays from the sun, and the human papillomavirus (HPV). Dental hygienists play an important role in the prevention and detection of oral cancer by educating and counseling Canadians in smoking cessation, by performing regular soft tissue examinations, and by screening for oral cancer at every visit.

5 Easy Steps to Good Oral Health

Source: CDHA



1. Brush your teeth daily
Use a power or manual toothbrush with soft bristles.



2. Floss your teeth daily
Use floss on its own or in a holder, or a special brush to clean.



3. Rinse using an antiseptic mouthwash
Rinsing will help to reduce the amount of bacteria.



4. Make healthy food choices
Meals and snacks high in nutrients and low in sugar are good for your overall health and your oral health.



5. Get regular dental hygiene care
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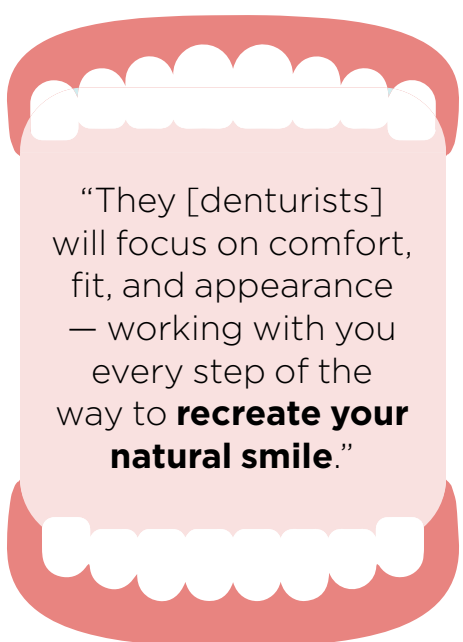
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Dentures: How Visiting A Denturist Can Benefit You

Poor oral health can affect more than just your mouth, it can also have an impact on your physical and emotional wellbeing, but visiting a denturist can provide you with much-needed support and expertise.



When tooth loss occurs — either through trauma or disease — many people feel overwhelmed. There will be many unfamiliar treatment and recovery considerations to take into account. One often overlooked factor is how emotionally difficult the process can be. The loss of natural teeth can have a major impact on a person's emotional wellbeing and overall health. Activities that once came naturally such as chewing, talking, and choosing what to eat become uncomfortable, embarrassing, and painful.

Advice, support, and compassion

Denturists specialize in the design and fabrication of complete and removable partial dentures, as well as overdentures on dental im-

plants (in some provinces). Denturists work directly with you during this process and offer advice, support, and compassion during what some find a difficult time.

"If someone feels afraid or unsure of how to deal with the process, that's where the benefit of visiting a denturist comes in," says a panel of denturists representing The Denturist Association of Canada. "Your denturist will provide you with the information you require to determine what is right for you. They will focus on comfort, fit, and appearance — working with you every step of the way to recreate your natural smile."

One of the great benefits of working with a denturist is the ability to create a one-on-one relationship. The same denturist that assesses you and advises you of treatment options will offer ongoing care for you and your dentures.

"Denturists have laboratories right in their offices," says the panel. "Most of the laboratory work is performed on the premises by the denturist who saw you to ensure that quality of care is consistent and personal."

Creating a new smile for you

Denturists are health care professionals who are self-regulated and governed by the same type of legislation as dentists and dental hygienists; meaning, you do not need a referral from another health care professional to consult a denturist.

"Replacing your natural teeth with dentures is more than trusting someone with your smile," says the panel, "because denturists are qualified practitioners who provide quality, custom dentures. They are committed to creating dentures that fit well, look attractive, and allow you to maintain your overall oral health."

"Your denturist's experience and professionalism help you to achieve the maximum benefit from the most advanced denture technology — it takes 17 muscles to smile but only one denturist!"

The panel included denturists that were representing The Denturist Association of Canada.

Bronwen Keyes-Bevan

Access to Care: More In Reach Than You Think

Regular dental visits can positively influence you emotionally, mentally, socially, and, less commonly noted, physically.

How oral health affects us

Your smile is the first thing people notice about you. Embarrassment of a smile, bad breath, or untreated tooth decay all impact the way a person speaks, eats, and socializes. Childhood tooth decay affects learning, behavior, self-esteem, diet, and sleep. The children in low-income bracket families have a decay rate 2.5 times higher, contributing to annual loss of 2.26 million school days a year.

Neglecting your mouth can also lead to a range of physical issues including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, respiratory disease, oral cancer, and pre-term or low-birth-weight babies.

The alarming stats

Six million Canadians do not visit a dentist regularly. Of those, 48 percent have gum disease. The gap of untreated dental conditions is causing an unnecessary burden on our health care system: 1 of 5 children, 3 of 10 adults, and 4 of 10 elderly use an emergency only pattern to address their dental care. This practice means they visit the emergency room at hospitals rather than the dentist for their dental needs. This lengthens wait times for other urgent care and puts an unwarranted strain on the health care system.

Why do so many not attend the dentist regularly?

Some reasons include neglect, lack of education on the value of dentistry in health care, lack of insurance, and affordability. Cost has been cited as the reason 17 percent of Canadians avoid the dentist, while 16 percent decline recommended care because of cost.

Of all the dental spending in Canada, half is from employer insurance. The other half is from out of pocket payments from patients. What many patients do not realize is



Lisa Philp
Canada's
Tooth Fairy,
Founding
Partner

"What many patients do not realize is that they can access an option for alternative payment via their dentist who partners with a reputable third party company who **will finance dental costs interest free.**"

that they can access an option for alternative payment via their dentist who partners with a reputable third party company who will finance dental costs interest free.

There are a handful of financial institutions in Canada that understand the need for dental patients to have other ways to pay for care. Canadians holding back care due to a lack of flexible payment options will benefit from programs designed to fit dental payments into restricted budgets and cash flow through financing approval. These approval processes are created to be simple — with acceptance being private and obtainable within minutes using online tablet programs — with no administrative work or complicated credit reporting.

When choosing a dentist, look for one that will be empathetic to your needs and wants, gives back in their community, focuses on prevention of gum disease, screens for oral cancer, and offers outside financing options as a method of payment.

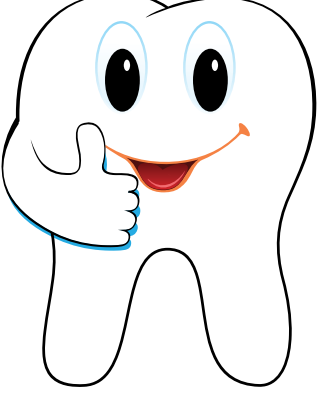
Lisa Philp

Denturists for ORAL HEALTH CARE


April is Oral Health Awareness Month

Make regular oral health screenings your first line of defense. The Canadian Cancer Society estimates that 4,100 new cases of oral cancer were diagnosed in Canada in the last year. Book an appointment with your Denturist to schedule your check-up and denture assessment today. Denturists can offer the following services:

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TIPS

What to Expect When You're Expecting

A Guide to Creating Oral Health Habits Early in Your Child

Ensuring the well-being of your child's oral health starts at pregnancy.

Here are oral health guidelines for parents based on recent Canadian Dental Association publications, studies and Health Canada recommendations, as outlined by Michelle Fowler, President of Canadian Dental Assistants' Association.

Pregnancy: "Baby's teeth actually start to develop as early as the first trimester," Michelle Fowler explains. Pregnant mothers should maintain a healthy diet rich in Vitamins A, C, and D with plenty of protein and calcium. Poor dietary and oral hygiene habits may disrupt the baby's enamel formation as well as leading to low birth weight.

1-3 months: Even before teeth appear, maintain good oral health by wiping the inside of the mouth with a wash cloth after each feeding.

3-6 months: "A tooth can start to decay as soon as it appears in the mouth," Fowler says. So begin introducing a toothbrush into the mouth and brush teeth gently with water. When the first tooth comes in, you can also bring the baby in for their first dentist appointment to check the overall health of the oral cavity.

6-12 months: Begin transitioning from bottles to sippy cups. "You don't want to put babies to bed with a bottle or a sippy cup unless it only has water in it," says Fowler. Limit juices and sweet drinks to just four ounces per day.

1 year: Brush your child's teeth at least twice a day with a small, thin layer of fluoridated toothpaste. Floss once a day. Choose healthy snacks like fruits, vegetables, nuts, and cheese to promote good oral health.

Maintenance: Bring your child to the dentist at least once a year. Parents should continue to brush their children's teeth until the age of seven or eight, when hand dexterity has developed sufficiently to brush their own teeth. ●

Andrea Yu



Revolutionary Research Changing the Landscape of Dentistry

University of Toronto and University of Saskatchewan share their innovative research – paving the path for the future of dentistry.

Dr. Dilani Senadheera (OMMR) studies samples from the plaque bank. Photo: Jeff Comber

Canada's First Plaque Bank Offers New Hope For Disease Prediction, Treatment

Imagine one day being able to diagnose diabetes, heart disease, or even cancer using a bacteria-filled tongue scraping the size of a pinhead.

This technology isn't science fiction, but a real possibility thanks to the University of Toronto, Faculty of Dentistry's new Oral Microbiome and Metagenomic Research and Training (OMMRT) Laboratory.

Following mounting evidence suggesting strong correlatives between oral and overall health, the OMMRT, a multi-disciplinary research and clinical surveillance unit at the U of T Faculty of Dentistry, has established Canada's first

plaque bank to investigate and treat disease by studying bacterial plaque found in the mouth.

Research findings
Scraped from easily accessible areas such as the tongue, bacteria are harvested which then undergo DNA fingerprinting. The different types and numbers of bacteria present are identified and catalogued, giving researchers snapshots of the bacteria in health and disease. It's hoped to eventually use the bacterial biomarkers to diagnose disease, but also to prognosticate which diseases, such as chronic gum diseases, may prove resistant to standard treatments.

While bacteria are being studied as a diagnostic tool, they are also being hailed as a possible treatment. Using an artificial mouth, the OMMRT's Dr. Senadheera is investigating plaque transplantation therapies, where engineered bacterial colonies are transplanted orally to fight disease.

"We want to create new knowledge about underlying causes of oral disease," says Dr. Howard Tenenbaum, Co-Director of the OMMRT and Professor at the Faculty of Dentistry. "We hope this can lead to personalized bio-therapies." ●

Dr. Erin Vollick, Communications Officer, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Toronto

Using Technology to Improve Access to Dental Care for Canadians

Oral health is integral to general health and well-being. Dental diseases are preventable and manageable if patients have a regular dental home.

But, many Canadians suffer unnecessary pain and hardship because they face access to care barriers and do not have a regular dental home from which to receive care.

Access to care barriers come in many forms. Patients may live hundreds of kilometers from the nearest clinic. They may face cultural or language barriers preventing them from seeking care. They may not be able to afford the cost of dental care. They

may be homebound, in long-term care, or have complex medical conditions preventing them from visiting a dental clinic.

Research findings
Using Geographic Information System (GIS) computer modelling, University of Saskatchewan, College of Dentistry, is creating 3-D pictures of where Canadians face access to care barriers and why. GIS enables them to geographically map the physical locations of dental clinics and services and how that location relates to the oral health, general health, and socioeconomic status (SES) of the population. With this research, we can now link clin-

ic location to populations and assess variables as diverse as poverty level, lone-parent households, home ownership, or living in dwellings requiring major repair. These measureable connections help determine their influence on the ability of Canadians to access care across inner-city neighbourhoods, cities, rural and remote communities, entire provinces, and eventually all of Canada. This advancement will enable us to develop better ways to help all Canadians access dental care in a timely manner. ●

Dr. Gerry Uswak, Dean, College of Dentistry, University of Saskatchewan

Novel insights into periodontitis, osteoporosis and arthritis

New wound healing technologies

Can diabetes be managed through the mouth?

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Tissue engineering and 3D bone printing

Tri-nation Aboriginal health studies

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Putting Their Time and Money Where Your Mouth Is

Underprivileged children are treated to new school clothing and supplies. Photo: Submitted

One Global Company's Commitment to Local Social Responsibility.

Doing well by doing good — this idea is at the very core of the way Henry Schein does business.

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For Henry Schein Canada, this means working to strengthen local communities while also improving access to health care. Through its Back to School Program, Henry Schein has supplied almost 3,800 underprivileged children in Canada with backpacks, clothing, and school supplies over the last few years, while at the same time providing dental screening and oral hygiene instruction. The company also supports its Canadian customers in improving oral health at home and abroad, donating more than \$400,000 worth of equipment to Canadian dentists who travel to underserved areas in order to provide free care.

According to Cy Elborne, President of Henry Schein Canada, this kind of com-

mitment to the larger society is at the forefront of the company's ethos. "We really relish doing this kind of work," says Elborne. "I've personally encouraged our over 800 Team Schein Canada Members to look at more creative ways to give back to our local communities. The response has been tremendous. This past year, each one of our local center business units across the country got involved in working with their communities. Our folks wound up participating in a whole range of projects, from painting schools to working in food banks."

Why such a wide range of projects? Elborne looks at any engagement with the local community as a stepping-stone to oral health and, ultimately, overall wellness. "I'd like to think that by helping as much as we can to raise awareness in our local communities through all our different efforts, we are also making some contribution to the overall health of people in the communities we serve — including raising awareness of the integral connection between oral health and overall health."

Directly engaging its Team Schein Members in giving back to society is a critical ingredient to strengthening the communities in which Henry Sche-

in operates. "Giving back to society isn't just the right thing to do," says Elborne. "It also engages our Team Schein Members to give their best to our customers and our company because they feel good about working for an organization that's not only doing well from a business perspective, but also doing good in the larger community. People are more likely to join our company and stay because they see the potential of doing something meaningful beyond their day-to-day challenges at work. And, our customers are more likely to want to do business with us because they see us as a company with higher standards."

Henry Schein's efforts in Canada are just one part of the company's global efforts to help health happen, which includes providing disaster relief in places like West Africa and Haiti and partnering with groups like the American Cancer Society to improve wellness, treatment, and prevention. By using its core competencies to give back to society, Henry Schein firmly believes that it is furthering the long-term success of the company while making the world a better place. ●

Daryl Keating



Patients prefer digital scanning solutions over messy, traditional impressions.

Technology Makes Dentist Visits Quick and Comfortable

When a prominent New York hedge fund manager chipped his front tooth one recent afternoon, he panicked. He was meeting with investors that night and didn't want to spend the occasion being embarrassed about his smile. But, his fears were unfounded. He walked into a dentist office at 4 p.m. and left 90 minutes later with a permanent crown. Crisis averted.

There may be a message in his story for the many Canadians who would rather have their tongues stuck to a frozen flagpole than visit a dentist. Thanks to modern technology, dental procedures are now more effective, more comfortable, and less time-consuming than ever before.

Countless dentists have switched to digital X-rays in recent years. The dentist places an electronic sensor in the patient's mouth. It captures images and sends them to a computer screen. The dentist then gets vivid images of decay and other problems, and can use these images to educate the patient about their case. Because the dentist is able to magnify these images, he or she is able to make a better diagnosis. Also, these digital X-Rays are processed in seconds rather than minutes.

Another major development in dentistry is the growing use of CAD/CAM, a computer software that is used to design and manufacture products such as crowns, veneers, and dentures. A dentist who has an in-house CAD/CAM and milling machine can complete a tooth restoration in one visit, saving his patient the hassle of coming back two or more times to complete the process.

The more dentists use these technologies, the less they need to insert trays filled with a gooey substance (impression material) into their patients' mouths in order to get impressions.

Cone beam CT is another big advancement. This computerized tomography gives dentists a quick 3-D image of a patient's oral or maxillofacial anatomy. Needless to say, this technology has proven invaluable to oral surgeons and periodontists when placing dental implants.

Dental care is money well spent

With patients enjoying better and faster treatment thanks to technological advancements, dental care professionals are hoping more people will tend to their oral health. Physicians feel the same way because dental health is tied to overall health.

For example, cavities and gum disease have been tied to diabetes, respiratory

diseases, and other serious conditions. Experts are looking into possible links between poor oral health and heart disease, and there is even some speculation that oral health is linked to women giving birth to underweight babies.

"It is important that we understand oral health as a key component of wellness and the prevention of disease. Untreated dental issues can lead to serious infection," adds Dr. Robert Gottlander, a dentist and Chief Marketing Officer with Henry Schein, the leading provider of dental products and services in Canada. "It is well-established that oral health is integrally connected to overall health."

Also, it's no secret that poor oral health can affect a person's appearance and self-esteem. "If you don't feel good about your mouth, it can change your behavior and shake your self-confidence," Gottlander says. "We can't underestimate the importance of a confident smile."

Gottlander and other dental care professionals agree that, even though dental care can be costly at times, it is money well spent. When it comes to dental health, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. ●

Randi Druzin

INSIGHT



Jo-Anne Jones
International Oral Health Lecturer

The Sex-Talk with Jo-Anne Jones: How the link between HPV and Oral Cancer is a Growing Concern

In the midst of preparing to present my research on HPV-related oral cancer, our family was dealt a crushing blow.

One of our cousins announced that she was diagnosed with late stage HPV-related tonsillar cancer. She was a fitness trainer having dedicated her life to healthy living. After a heroic and relentless battle with the disease, she lost her life 16 months later at the age of 46. This month would have marked her 50th birthday. She leaves behind a husband and three beautiful daughters. A wonderful life that gave so much to others gone far too soon.

The changing face of oral cancer

There are two distinct pathways related to the cause of oral cancer: smoking and sexually related HPV. It is the second pathway that has caught both the medical and dental profession off guard. Over 75 percent of sexually active Canadians will have an HPV infection in their lifetime. For those who are health compromised, or have had persistent exposure and infection to a high risk strain of HPV, abnormal cell development may occur and advance to a malignancy. The highest risk for transmission of HPV is through oral sex; however, it may be passed on through kissing if the virus is active in the mouth.



The Subtle Life-Saving Oral Cancer Symptoms

- A change in the voice or hoarseness.
- A continual or recurring sore throat that does not respond to antibiotics.
- Pain when swallowing or difficulty swallowing.
- A feeling that something is either stuck in the throat or a lump in the throat.
- Continual enlarged glands in the neck, ear pain on one side, slurred speech, or difficulty articulating some sounds.
- Tonsillar enlargement and continual inflammation usually visible on one side.
- A tongue that tracks to one side when stuck out.

The biggest misconception surrounding oral cancer is that if you are a non-smoker, non-drinker you are not at risk. In a 20 year study, smoking related or non-HPV related oral and oropharyngeal cancer had declined by 50 percent, while HPV-related oral and oropharyngeal cancer had increased by 225 percent. Historically we would have identified the older male who was a heavy smoker and possibly heavy drinker. However, now, it is the younger male who is often a non-smoker, non-drinker.

Prevalence and prevention

HPV is the fastest growing sexually transmitted disease worldwide. Research suggests that by 2020, HPV-related oral and oropharyngeal cancer will surpass HPV-related cervical cancer — making it the predominant HPV-related cancer in Canada.

Regular oral cancer screenings by your dentist or dental hygienist as well as self-examination are critical. Also, there are additional screening devices that are available to identify what normal white light examination may not have revealed. The Gardasil vaccination is also important to protect against nine high-risk strains of HPV. As more young boys and girls are vaccinated, we will begin to see the decline of this escalation in oral cancers. However, even oral sex is not safe sex as it is the highest mode of transmission for the HPV virus and its connectivity with oral and oropharyngeal cancers.

The hopeful future

The present challenge is to elevate awareness amongst dental professionals to effectively screen and be aware of subtle life-saving symptoms when treating today's dental patient. The future is to see much earlier awareness of oral cancer discovery, better survival outcomes, and enhanced quality of life for survivors. ●

Jo-Anne Jones

Keep Your Pet Smiling

Why Your Pet's Oral Health Matters

Healthy and happy begins on the inside. When you nourish what's on the inside, you start to see those benefits on the outside. A nutrition-first approach to your pet's total wellbeing is the best way to ensure their oral and overall health.

How common are oral health issues for pets?

Periodontal disease is very common — 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats suffer from some form of the disease by the age of three. According to the American Veterinarian Medical Association (AVMA), most dental disease occurs below the gum line, making it difficult for pet owners to see. Unlike humans, cats and dogs are not susceptible to the formation of tooth cavities; the demineralization of teeth in dogs is also not common. Interestingly, mouth size matters when it comes to oral health in pets. Although all pets can be affected, small and toy breed dogs are more likely to develop issues and problems which can sometimes be more severe given their smaller jaw.

There are three main types of dental problems in cats and dogs: bad breath, gingivitis, and, most commonly, periodontitis. The mouth health plays a large role in overall health. Proper mouth hygiene can prevent bacterial from growing and a strong immune system can prevent future complications. Poor tooth health can also make it hard for pets — especially in their senior years — to properly chew food, which could lead to a bigger strain on their digestive tract and poor absorption of key nutrients. Dental disease can lead to discomfort, reduced enjoyment of meal time, and can negatively impact a pet's mood and wellbeing.

How can I make sure my pet's mouth stays healthy?

Prevention is key when it comes to dental health. Consistent care by pet



owners, such as brushing their pet's teeth weekly is the most effective means of protection. A good recommendation is coconut oil, a natural anti-microbial, used on a pet appropriate tooth brush. It does take hard work, but the rewards are worth the efforts for a happier and healthier pet.

The type of recipe also matters. Given the prevalence of oral health issues in cats and dogs, pet foods using smart, natural ingredients are the best option. Choosing pet foods with ingredients from specially selected fibres, and some key nutrients such as vitamin E and selenium, are the best option to keep your pet smiling. Kibble texture and shapes that promote mastication are also key. When choosing a dry kibble, make sure to consider size, shape, and textures that benefit their oral health.

A healthy diet is especially important as your pet ages, since issues increase in severity as pets

grow older. A good choice for senior pet food may include the use of green tea, which has been shown to act against canine dental plaque bacteria. For small and toy dog breeds, other innovative options to ensure their oral health include al dente kibbles, which are designed to promote chewing and further contribute to good oral health.

Besides brushing and a smart diet, there are other great products on the market — from chew toys, dental floss, to plaque reduction toys — which when combined with periodic vet visits can contribute to a successful oral health program.

How else can I maintain my pet's overall health?

Oral health is important, but it's only one of the many factors contributing to your pet's overall health. To ensure your pet remains healthy, it is important to choose pet foods that take a whole body approach to nutrition. It is also important to look for foods that use natural recipes, optimum combinations of ingredients, and easy to digest proteins. **o**

Periodontal disease is very common — **80%** of dogs and **70%** of cats suffer from some form of the disease by the age of 3.

Heather McKay

5 Easy Ways to Ensure Your Pet Maintains a Healthy Mouth



Brush Their Teeth



Provide a Healthy Diet



Chew Toys & Plaque Reduction Toys



Dental Floss



Periodic Vet Visits

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