



Healthy Habits

Faculty and Staff Wellness Program

Calvin College

May, 2009

Did you know?

Cinnamon gum kills bacteria in your mouth giving you better breath!

Bad breath can be a simple fix. Drink more water!

Dental Health

Most individuals know how to brush their teeth. But is good dental hygiene really as simple as that? In fact, the basics we've heard from our dentist—brushing, flossing, and fluoride rinses really do make all the differences. Sugar, carbohydrates, and starches, along with other oft-blamed causes of tooth decay, are not necessarily the problem. The problem comes from letting the sugar remain on your teeth, making prompt removal (specifically, brushing after meals) the critical factor. To prevent tooth decay, brush at least two times a day, preferably with a toothpaste that contains fluoride.

But what actually causes tooth decay? Bacteria in the mouth digests the starches and sugars that remain on the teeth, turning the carbohydrates into acid. This acid, combined with bacteria, food debris, and saliva, creates plaque, which in turn leads to cavities. Therefore, reducing the amount of bacteria in the mouth and/or reducing the amount of time that food particles remain on the teeth are key ingredients to preventing most tooth decay.

Tooth whitening, a

popular option in dental care, has little effect on actual tooth health and is an impermanent and inconclusive method of addressing oral health problems. Most toothpastes help remove surface stains because they contain mild abrasives, and certain whitening toothpastes may lighten tooth color by a shade. However, like any other whitening product, the effects can fade in as little as one month, though the lightening may be prolonged by a proper and balanced diet.

Diet actually plays a large role in maintaining good dental health. Diet soda can be worse for teeth than regular pop because it contains more enamel-damaging acidic phosphates. Cinnamon, on the other hand, can be helpful because it decreases the amount of bacteria in the mouth. Similarly, xylitol, a sugar substitute found in chewing gum, increases saliva production and prevents bacteria replication in the mouth. Water keeps bacteria in the mouth to a minimum, decreasing the risk for both tooth decay and bad breath.

Persistent bad

breath, known as halitosis, can have a variety of simple causes, including a low-carb diet, an abundance of the chemical called ketones, produced when fat is burned, or infection. Less common causes of halitosis include kidney and liver failure or diabetes, though additional indicators of diabetes would include gum inflammation, slow healing of oral tissues, and a persistent dry mouth. Of course, these signs are not conclusive indicators of diabetes, but if you experience them consistently, you may consider asking your dentist.

In general, oral health can be maintained with proper and consistent brushing, flossing, and rinsing, supplemented by a balanced diet and good water intake. Bad breath is normal (for example, morning breath stems from decreased saliva production while asleep) to a certain extent, but excessive or prolonged halitosis may merit a trip to the dentist.

Proper oral health is an important part of our physical well-being. It is another "healthy habit" to work at as we strive to maintain a holistic, healthy life.²

What does the dentist of the year get?
A little plaque.

What does a dentist do on a roller coaster?
He braces himself.

Health Habits Highlights of the Month

Spinach Berry Salad¹

4 packed cups torn fresh spinach
 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries
 1 cup fresh, or frozen, blueberries
 1 small sweet onion, sliced
 1/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted
 Salad Dressing
 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar, or cider vinegar
 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 2 tablespoons honey
 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
 1 teaspoon curry powder (can be omitted)
 1/8 teaspoon pepper

In a large salad bowl, toss together spinach, strawberries, blueberries, onion and pecans. In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine dressing ingredients. Shake well. Pour over salad and toss to coat. Serve immediately.

Calories.....158
 Cholesterol.....10mg
 Protein.....4g
 Sodium.....197mg
 Carbohydrate.....25g
 Fiber.....4g
 Total Fat.....5g
 Saturated Fat.....0.5g
 Monounsaturated Fat....3g
 Potassium.....173mg
 Calcium.....77mg



Rhae-Ann Booker



Tasha Paul

For Tasha Paul and Rhae-Ann Booker, February 20th, 2008 was set apart as a day to start the rest of their healthy lives. It was on this date that both women, from Pre-College Programs, decided to join the Weight Watchers at Work program. For Tasha, who had already committed to a healthier lifestyle as a New Year's resolution, this was just another step in her commitment to better eating and weight loss. Rhae-Ann was nearing the end of a Ph.D. program and wanted to achieve a weight loss goal right along-side her graduation goal.

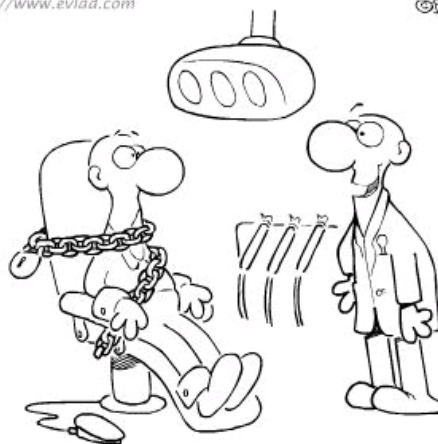
Tasha talks about the challenge of making conscientious decisions daily. She comments on the fact that sometimes it is hard to choose to snack on veggies and water instead of French fries. But she also knows that as long as there is balance in what she eats, it is a good day. Even in the case of a "not-as-successful" day, Tasha is encouraged by the fact that tomorrow can be better. "There will be ups-and-downs," said Tasha, "but if you stick with it, you will be successful."

Rhae-Ann's best advice is to give your goals to God. She had never considered involving God in her health goals before, but when a woman at church encouraged her to do so she thought it was a great idea. For Rhae-Ann, her "weight loss became a bigger success after she rebuked the addiction of over-eating and tapped into the ultimate source of strength she has in God."

Both women appreciate the convenience of the Weight Watchers at Work program. Tasha and Rhae-Ann agree that if this program was not as easily accessible, neither would have gotten so involved. They both put their minds to it and have worked at their weight loss goals together. Without the support of each other, as well as other accountability partners, their new healthy eating habits would not have become habits at all. Tasha and Rhae-Ann love the Weight Watchers program because it helps create an atmosphere of camaraderie on Calvin's campus – one where they can discuss "points" and provide encouragement for one another. Working together, these women can take pride in the fact that they are achieving their goals. Tasha has lost 62lbs, and Rhae-Ann has lost more than 65lbs. Congratulations ladies! Keep up the great work!

<http://www.evlad.com>

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"Absolutely nothing to worry about!"

3.

1. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-recipes/RE00144>
2. <http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/default.htm>
3. <http://www.bettercartoon.com/portfolio/data/media/30/dental%20cartoons%2004.jpg>