

Know your basics of dental health

Dental health and oral hygiene is an often overlooked matter, especially among us Bengalis. Two things contribute to the commonness of this matter; first is our carefree attitude. We do not seem to categorise dental health as a major health issue. The second aspect contributing to the neutralisation of this matter is our resistant culture. This highlights the fact that we tend to wait until the last minute, and in some cases, until a disease has reached its worst condition, before seeking medical assistance.

During an interview session with Prof Dr Md Ruhul Amin, Professor and Head, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Dhaka Medical College, and President of BAMOS, enlightened us with matters people should be aware of.

What are the symptoms for understanding that someone is facing dental problems?

There are a few simple and common factors that work as triggers in this matter. First is food stuck between the teeth often. If teeth are not cleaned properly, even after brushing, it may be a trigger factor that one is suffering from dental problems.

Another one can be teeth being so sharp that it causes injury inside the mouth, such as on the tongue or inside the cheek. Common symptoms include difficulty chewing, toothache, change in teeth colour, and cold sensitive teeth.

What is the ideal routine for maintaining good oral hygiene?

The ideal routine has four steps. The first

step is to rinse the mouth properly. This should be done after every meal. Second is to brush regularly to clean out food particles stuck in-between the gaps of the teeth. The third step is to floss, using a dental floss and avoiding a toothpick. Lastly, to top it off, one should rinse the mouth with mouthwash, mainly before sleeping at night.

What are some lifestyle habits one should consider to maintain optimum oral health?

Some foods are especially harmful for the teeth, and should be avoided as much as possible. Bakery items should not be consumed much and fast food must be avoided as much as possible. Food containing sugar, such as chocolates and sugary beverages must be avoided. Tea and coffee stain the teeth, although plain tea is not harmful.

An important matter is chewing your food thoroughly. Many people blend certain food because they think chewing tough and crunchy food will cause damage to the teeth; this is a myth. Chewing certain food, especially fibrous ones, such as carrot and guava is actually good for maintaining oral health. Our teeth also require some exercise and the natural juices from these fruits and vegetables are essential in maintaining their nutrition.

What is the worst habit among people of our country that leads to dental health issues?

Speaking of our country and the Asian



subcontinent, oral cancer is a deadly and prevalent concern. The main culprit of oral cancer can be attributed to tobacco, especially smokeless tobacco, such as betel leaf. Once a person is diagnosed with oral cancer, it becomes harder to maintain oral hygiene. They are unable to brush properly and is more prone to getting infections.

When starting to treat the cancer, after chemotherapy and radiotherapy, saliva production in the mouth is reduced. This results in a dry mouth, making it hard for the person to speak and chew. Furthermore, the pH level of saliva becomes alkaline, causing further oral complications. Eventually, this can lead to mouth ulcers.

Is brushing teeth twice a day optimum for everyone or are there any discrepancies?

Twice is optimum. One should make

time to brush every day before going to bed, and after breakfast. However, if someone cannot find time for that, I would suggest to prioritise brushing before sleep. Many people are not aware about the proper way of brushing. Teeth must always be brushed from top to bottom in the upper jaw and vice versa for lower jaw. Brushing should not exceed 2-3 minutes and twice a day, because, as counter intuitive as it may sound, it will cause harm.

Is there any risk group or particular age group who should be more careful?

New born babies are often fed through a feeder, which is the norm. But feeding with a feeder is highly discouraged, especially in the case of a sleeping baby. Using a feeder frequently damages the teeth and it may cause the front teeth to come forward, and distort the overall shape. It can be categorised as a bad habit, the same way as thumb sucking is. Therefore, kids should not be given a feeder from their second year onwards, and must develop the habit of using a glass from an early age.

What are your remarks on the campaign "BDS nah to daater daakter nah?"

In order to attain a BMDC Registration, all dentists must be BDS certified. Otherwise, people will fall victim of wrong treatment. This is the minimum requirement.

By Fariha Amber

Photo courtesy: Prof Dr Md Ruhul Amin

BDS* না তো দাঁতের ডাক্তার না

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