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Men's Oral Health

June is National Men's Health Month. Across the country, preventative screenings, health fairs, media spotlights, and other health education and outreach activities will raise the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys.

Why is oral health important for me?

Men are less likely than women to take care of their physical health and, according to research, their oral health is equally ignored. Good oral health has been linked to longevity, yet one of the most common factors associated with infrequent dental checkups is just being male. Men are less likely than women to seek preventive dental care and often neglect their oral health for years, visiting a dentist only when a problem arises. In fact, when it comes to oral health, the average man brushes his teeth 1.9 times a day and will lose 5.4 teeth by age 72. If he smokes, he can plan on losing 12 teeth by age 72. Men also are more likely than women to develop oral and throat cancer and periodontal (gum) disease.

Do you take medications?

Since men are more likely to suffer from heart attacks, they also are more likely to be on medications that can cause dry mouth. If you take heart or blood pressure medication or if you take antidepressants, your salivary flow could be inhibited, increasing the risk for cavities. Saliva helps to reduce the cavity-causing bacteria found in your mouth.

Do you use tobacco?

If you smoke or chew tobacco, you have a greater risk for gum disease and oral cancer. Men are affected twice as often as women, and 95 percent of oral cancers occur in those ages 40 and older. More than 8,000 people die each year from oral and pharyngeal diseases. If you use tobacco, it is important to see a dentist frequently for cleanings and to ensure your mouth remains healthy. Your general dentist can perform a thorough screening for oral cancer and help with tobacco cessation.

Do you play sports?

If you participate in sports, you have a greater potential for trauma to your mouth and teeth. If you play contact sports or participate in any activity with potentail for face injury, it is important to use a mouthguard, which is a flexible appliance made of plastic that protects teeth from trauma. Your dentist can discuss mouthguard options with you.

How often should I visit a dentist?

Regardless of gender, it is important to visit a dentist twice a year. Inform your dentist of any medications you are taking, as well as tobacco use and sports activities. In between visits, floss daily and brush your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste. For more information on men's oral health and other oral health topics, visit *www.knowyourteeth.com.*

Academy of General Dentistry

Resources

www.knowyourteeth.com
Brought to you by the AGD, this Web site answers important dental health questions, offers the latest information on current treatments, provides tips for first-rate oral hygiene, and it can help visitors find highly qualified general dentists near where they live.

1.877.2X.A.YEAR
AGD's toll-free referral number. Call to locate an AGD member dentist in your area.

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