

Misconceptions Regarding Teeth and Oral Health

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1) Dentistry is the science of teeth alone.

Wrong:

Dentistry is the art and science of teeth and the entire oral cavity.

2) Calcium supplements strengthen the teeth.

Wrong:

Once the teeth are formed and erupted in the mouth calcium supplements have no effect on the teeth.

3) People believe that some dentrifices (tooth pastes) are superior than the rest.

Wrong:

These claims are made only for marketing purposes. The efficiency of cleaning the teeth depends on how it is done and what kind of tooth brush is used. There are mechanical tooth brushes and electrical brushes. They can be hard, medium and soft. Medium electric tooth brush is generally recommended.

4) A person can be healthy inspite of bad oral health.

Wrong:

A person can never be healthy if his oral hygiene is poor. A lot of systemic diseases like heart attacks, strokes, dementia are attributed to bad oral hygiene. Infections occurring in the mouth travels in the gut and then enters the blood stream.

5) In the old age a person is always without teeth.

Old age is synonymous with edentulism.

Wrong:

Teeth can last a life time if proper care is taken by regular check ups and performing routine prophylaxis and treatment of dental caries by a trained professional.

6) Teeth are only helpful to chew the food.

Wrong:

Teeth are very important for speech and esthetics. They help to preserve the jaw bone thereby giving a youthful appearance. If the teeth are lost, the bone also resorbs thereby giving an aged appearance.

7) There are 32 teeth. So if one tooth is lost the other teeth can function for the lost tooth. Hence there is no need to replace the missing teeth.

Wrong:

Each and every tooth has a certain role to play in the mouth. If one tooth is lost the other teeth shift and move out of their place to try and close the space created by the missing teeth. The opposing teeth extrude to meet the opposing ridge in order to establish contact. Since the teeth shift out of their original position gaps are created between the teeth thereby giving rise to food impaction and wedging. This gives rise to array of periodontal problems, pocket formation and collapse of the dental arch. The teeth then become loose.

8) Visit the dentist only in case of pain.

Wrong:

Whether there is pain or not a 6 monthly visit to the dentist is a must for routine check-ups to detect caries and provide gum treatment to remove calculus and to detect any other pathology if present.

9) Deciduous teeth or milk teeth as they are popularly known do not require any care. They can be neglected or extracted prematurely.

Wrong:

Deciduous teeth are very important for the growth and development of jaw bones. If deciduous teeth are decayed and infected it is likely that the permanent teeth beneath are also affected.

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