Dentists, Pharmacists Raise Awareness of Medication-Induced Dry Mouth

Leading dental and pharmacy organizations are teaming up to promote oral health and raise public awareness of dry mouth, a side effect commonly caused by taking prescription and over-the-counter medications. More than 500 medications can contribute to oral dryness. Medications include those for allergies, asthma, blood pressure, decongestants, diuretics, and antidepressants. In its most severe form, dry mouth can lead to extensive tooth decay, mouth sores and oral infections, particularly among the elderly.

With regular saliva production, your teeth are constantly bathed in a mineral-rich solution that helps keep your teeth strong and resistant to decay.

Common symptoms include trouble eating, speaking and chewing, burning sensations or a frequent need to sip water while eating.

Individuals with dry mouth should have regular dental checkups for evaluation and treatment. Be sure to carry an up to date medication list at all times and tell us what medications you are taking.

Increasing fluid intake, chewing sugarless gum, taking frequent sips of water or sucking on ice chips can also help relieve dry mouth symptoms. Avoiding tobacco and intake of caffeine, alcohol and carbonated beverages may also help those with the condition. We may recommend using saliva substitutes or oral moisturizers to keep your mouth wet.

Injectable Progesterone Contraceptives May Be Associated with Gum Disease

A study found that women who are currently taking (DMPA) injectable contraception or who have taken it in the past are more likely to have indicators of poor periodontal health, including gingivitis, and gum disease than women who have never taken the contraceptive.

Gum disease causes the gums to become red, swollen and bleed easily. It can eventually lead to tooth loss. Hormones can play a role in a woman’s dental health. If a woman has used this form of contraceptive, it is important to maintain excellent oral care and see your dentist regularly.

Pennisetum American-Black Candle Millet

Thanks once again to Christine’s brother for sending these seeds from “The Fragrant Path” in Nebraska.

Black Candle Millet is an important forage crop in the southern United States and grain crop in India and Africa. A robust grass to 6-7 feet and in this variety coming as close to the color black as is commonly seen in foliage plants. Sow direct but not until the soil is warm. The black color is not apparent in early growth. A clump of it makes a strong focal point in the landscape. It will stand long into the winter and provides food for the songbirds.
Beyond the Brush: Five Ways to Help Promote Healthy Teeth and Gums

Routine tooth brushing, flossing and regular check-ups by a dental professional remain the cornerstone of a healthy mouth. However, pairing a few well-known healthy-lifestyle habits with your daily oral health regimen may also help reduce your risk for gum disease.

1. Eat and Drink up. It is well known that eating a balanced diet leads to proper nutrition and helps keep the body running effectively. Foods containing omega-3, calcium, vitamin d and even honey have all been shown to reduce the incidence and severity of gum disease.

2. Hit the gym. Frequent exercise is a recognized way to avoid being overweight, and it may ultimately reduce your risk of gum disease. Researchers have found that subjects who maintained a healthy weight and had high levels of physical fitness had a lower incidence of severe gum disease than those who did not exercise.

3. Stress less. Stress can lead to a variety of health complications, including gum disease. Increased levels of cortisol, which the body releases when experiencing stress, can intensify the destruction of the gums and bone due to gum disease. In addition, another study indicated that people experiencing stress are more likely to neglect their oral hygiene.

4. Kick the habit. Smoking is not only a leading cause of respiratory and cardiovascular disease, it is also a major risk factor for gum disease. Research has shown that smoking not only increases the chance of developing gum disease but it can also affect the success treatments for existing gum disease.

5. See your physician and dentist. Regular checkups by your doctor can help with early diagnosis of several health issues, including gum disease. Research associates gum disease with other chronic inflammatory diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and rheumatoid arthritis. Therefore, by screening for systemic disease early and receiving any needed treatment, you also may benefit the health of your gums.