

It's the Brushing That Counts, Health Officer Says of Teeth

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The fundamental value of the toothbrush is sometimes forgotten owing to the current emphasis on dentifrices. Nonetheless, rapturous advertising to the contrary, the regular brushing of the teeth is more important than the type of paste, powder or liquid cleanser that is used.

The toothbrush has been a toilet article for centuries, but the exact place and time of its origin are unknown. The early Arabians are generally given credit for its introduction, although there are rival claims on behalf of the Chinese and Japanese.

Certainly the first toothbrush of the early Arabians was a primitive affair, usually self-manufactured, and consisted of a small twig well-chewed at the end. The resulting loose fibres were then used to brush the teeth.

It was only a little more than half a century ago that the dental profession in the United States recognized that preventive dental care was of first importance. That mouth hygiene through brushing the teeth was the starting point for preventing tooth decay and gum diseases.

Started About 1900
The dental education campaign started in Alabama around 1900. Evidently progress was slow, for as late as 1931 it was estimated that at least 80 million Americans had yet to use a toothbrush with any regularity.

Early educational campaigns started off with several faulty premises. The time to brush the teeth, it was stated, was the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. Another weak point in early dental education was the over-emphasis of the dentists and dentists who sometimes claimed that regular brushing of the teeth would prevent tooth decay almost entirely. Indeed, nearly everyone in the country eventually became familiar with the slogan, "a clean tooth never decays."

Enthusiasm Dimmed
But many people, who had conscientiously brushed their teeth on schedule, were unsuccessful in keeping them much beyond middle age. Although the loss was sometimes caused by decay, more frequently it was due to gum disease. Naturally, this often dimmed the enthusiasm of the older generation for the use of the toothbrush, many of whom may have regarded the matter as something of an effete nuisance anyway.

However, regular brushing of the teeth did reduce the number of cavities which otherwise would have occurred, and this was proved by several reliable studies conducted among school children, both in the United States and abroad.

The trouble with all this advice about brushing the teeth was that it didn't go far enough. It was finally realized that good all-round mouth health was the result of many factors, which, in addition to cleanliness included a proper diet and the absence of certain diseases.

Diet Important
Diet was found to be a most important causative factor in gum and tooth troubles. This is chiefly due to the preference of Western man for certain types of food, particularly sweet starchy foods. Americans now eat 10 times the amount of sugar consumed by their grandparents and three times more than is needed for good nutrition. Other carbohydrates including highly refined white flours, and quantities of soft foods are also common in the diet, and some of it is conducive to good mouth health.

These foods, when left on the teeth, tend to ferment and the resulting acids attack the tooth enamel and cause tooth decay. Indeed, a study of primitive Greenlanders shows that tooth decay increased about 50 per cent the first year they were exposed to the refined foods imported from Denmark. Similar evidence is found in studies of Eskimos and other primitive groups.

When Is Important
Nevertheless, many of the ill effects of faulty diet can be overcome by faithful use of the toothbrush, according to research recently completed at Northwestern University. It's all in how and when the toothbrush is used, particularly then.

The University experiments proved that it is more important to brush the teeth right after eating—and this must be done even when nothing more than a snack is consumed. In the study, which involved 900 students, dental decay was reduced 60 per cent just by cleaning the mouth and teeth directly after eating.

It was also discovered that a good brushing of the mouth with water after eating was almost as good as brushing in getting rid of the food particles and sweetenings which encourage the multiplication of bacteria that provide the conditions favorable to tooth decay.

In short, a few little tricks will greatly reduce the amount of tooth decay experienced by any individual regardless of what his diet may be. First, brush the teeth after eating if this is at all possible. If it isn't, or if you are one of those persons who just can't be bothered, rinse the mouth with water. And develop the habit of ending a meal with what some dentists call "detergent foods." These include such raw foods as apples, oranges, celery, and carrots. And no food, it is often said by those who should know, equals the raw apple as a cleanser.

Good Gum Care
But, considering prevalent dietary habits of all procedures for protecting both teeth and gums, none is better than brushing the teeth and gums properly at the proper times. "It's the brushing that counts" was the theme of this year's National Dental Health Week, March 5 through March 10, and while it is true that a clean tooth can decay, brushing helps more than anything else to lessen the possibility of both gum disease and tooth decay. Additional information on mouth care will be mailed to anyone who sends a card of request to the Los Angeles County Health Department, 241 N. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 12.

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What Makes Your Tax Form Bounce? Director Has Tip

What makes a Federal income tax return bounce? "Any number of things," states the District Director of Internal Revenue, "but it is surprising how many little things make it necessary to set a return aside for further examination."

Then he went on to enumerate some of the things that make necessary an investigation of the return. One of the principal things is failure to sign the return. Thousands are received during every filing period, in which there is no signature or, in the case of a joint return, the signature of the husband or the wife is missing. In such cases, it is necessary to communicate with the taxpayer and secure the lacking signature.

Mathematical errors are very common. Electronic equipment in the Director's office identifies such errors immediately, and explanations are necessary. Exemption miscouints are a type for a very large number of erroneous returns. Three types of error predominate in this matter: in many cases the count is incorrect; in others the dependents are not properly identified; and in still others the dependency computation does not work out with the figures.

Schedules incomplete. In numerous cases, required schedules are not completed sufficiently to substantiate deductions. Adequate explanations of claimed deductions such as those for sick pay, retirement income credit, and dividends received credit are necessary. Without them, the Internal Revenue Service is unable to process the return.

Missing W-2's—Withholding Statements—are often the cause of delayed processing. The W-2 is the only immediate evidence that the Internal Revenue has that the credit for pre-payment of tax has actually been made, and thus the W-2 becomes a voucher for pre-paid tax, which is necessary in order to give the taxpayer proper credit. The burden is on the

employee to obtain this form from his employer.

Must Compute Tax
Numerous cases reveal the taxpayer using a regular Form 1040 as though it were a Form 1040-A, and not completing his tax computation. If the form 1040 is used, it must be completed to the point of determining the actual amount of additional tax, or the refund due. In 1040-A, usage the Internal Revenue Service determines the tax; but with Form 1040, this duty rests with the taxpayer.

As the filing period draws to a close, there are many instances in which the taxpayer bundles up a partially completed form, accompanied by partial records and sends it in to meet the filing deadline. This, of course, is unacceptable as a return.

Individuals who have any difficulty in the preparation of their returns may receive advice and necessary aid by tele-

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