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Dental Care: Oral Health and Wellness

There is a strong relationship between your oral health and general health. Did you know that poor oral health can lead to many seemingly unrelated medical conditions? In fact, oral bacteria and oral disease have been linked to a variety of serious illnesses, including heart disease, diabetes, stroke and pregnancy complications.

Importance of Oral Health

The following examples illustrate the relationship between your oral health and general health:

- Tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs affect both your overall and oral health.
- Dry mouth, or a lack of saliva, increases your risk of tooth decay.
- Oral pain resulting in an inability to eat properly can prevent you from getting the nutrition your body needs to stay.

Periodontal Disease

Oral health can often be used to diagnose underlying health issues:

- The advanced form of gum disease, called periodontitis, causes tooth loss and is also sometimes associated with cardiovascular disease, stroke and bacterial pneumonia.
- Diabetics are more likely to develop periodontitis, and more severe cases of it.

Quick Takes

Smart Trick-or-Treat Giveaways

Gone are the days when parents would normally bake and prepare food snacks that are a little more health conscious. In place of homemade goods, provide pre-packaged treats that are sanitary, safe and easy to pass along to the kids. Here is a list to keep handy when you are doing your holiday shopping.

Edible treats:

- Small boxes of raisins, cranberries and other dried fruits in their own packaging.
- Individual packages of trail mix.
- Small packages of potato chips and pretzels.
- Little boxes of animal crackers.
- 100-calorie packages of cookies, chips and crackers (baked and low-fat).
- Juice boxes, 100 percent juice.
- Sugarless chewing gum.
- Low-sugar fruit leather.
- Packaged cheese and crackers or peanut butter crackers.

When you return home from trick-or-treating, make sure to go through your child's Halloween bag to search for unwrapped edibles, items that may not be safe and toys that are not age-appropriate. Also, if your child has an allergy, check the labels of each item.

Be unique on your block this year by passing out smart treats!

What This Means to You

Given the potential link between periodontitis and systemic health problems, preventing periodontitis may turn out to be an important step in maintaining your overall health. In most cases, this can be accomplished by practicing good daily oral hygiene, including brushing and flossing and regular seeing a dentist for cleanings. Tell your dentist about changes in your oral health, including any recent illnesses or chronic conditions.

Also provide your dentist with an updated health history, including medication you use; both prescription and over-the-counter. If you smoke, talk to your dentist about options for quitting.

Sources:

Zywave (Accessed 9/20/18)

<https://www.colgate.com/en-us/oral-health/basics/nutrition-and-oral-health/prevent-tooth-decay-with-halloween-candy-alternatives-1013>

Baked Apples & Sweet Potatoes

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 5 sweet potatoes (cooked, nearly tender)
- 4 apples (cored, sliced)
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup margarine
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ cup hot water
- 1 Tbsp. honey

DIRECTIONS

Ingredient Tip: Roast onions to bring out sweetness.

1. Heat the oven to 400 F. Grease a casserole dish with butter or margarine.
2. Slice the apples and sweet potatoes.
3. Layer the dish with sweet potatoes, apple slices, and some brown sugar, salt and margarine pieces (in that order). Repeat this layer pattern until the dish is filled.
4. Sprinkle top layer with the remaining brown sugar, margarine and nutmeg.
5. Mix hot water and honey, then pour the mix over the top layer. Bake for about 30 minutes.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

300 Calories
 2 g Protein
 8 g Fat
 2 g Saturated fat
 60 g Carbohydrate
 6 g Fiber
 320 mg Sodium