

DDS DENTAL NEWS

Flossing..... Do I Have To????



In the past several weeks flossing has taken center stage in the media, dental offices and everyday conversations. The big controversy is that there are no scientific studies to support the claim that flossing is beneficial to one's oral health. I am not a scientist or a researcher, but I have worked in the dental field for over 30 years and have had the privilege of seeing many mouths. Some that were flossed and some that were not. I also have great respect for science and the need to do research to support what we recommend to the people that we provide care and advice to.

This article is an editorial of what I think represents best practice and is not backed up by science. It is just based on my experience and what I have observed.

Let's start from the beginning. There are basically two major families of bacteria that may reside in our mouth. One group causes cavities and one group causes gum disease. Some people may have both types of bacteria in their mouth. Other people may have one type and some may have none. If the bacteria is present in the mouth it will multiply and can be seen in the sticky substance we call plaque (it's always fun to put plaque under the microscope). Plaque is soft and sticky and is easily removed by mechanical objects such as toothbrush and floss. Why do we need both? The toothbrush works very well in taking the plaque off the front surfaces of teeth, as well as inside and chewing surfaces. Toothbrushes cannot reach in between the teeth. This means that the sticky plaque is left behind to cause mouth odor, gum irritation, and bleeding gums.

However, flossing is difficult for most people and requires a great deal of coordination and manual dexterity. Comments, such as, "my mouth is too small and my hands are too big" are heard several times a day in most dental offices. Anyone with arthritis or any other physical disability in their hands will certainly have difficulty flossing. In my opinion, improper flossing can actually cut gums and cause damage to the gum tissue. So what is one to do?

There are other safe ways to clean in between teeth. One of my favorites is a little brush called interproximal brush and it looks like a small Christmas tree. It is located at the end of a small handle, disposable, easy to use and will not cause damage to the gums.

Staff who help individuals with oral care are more willing to use it, so it creates better outcomes. My other favorite is a rubber tip that removes plaque at the gum line and massages the gum tissue. However after reading this article, which is solely my opinion, please discuss each individual case with the dentist or the dental hygienist. Ask them what they recommend and then ask them to show you exactly how to use the particular product. Good luck and please do not give up on cleaning between your teeth! For more information please feel free to contact me at Izabella.pulvermacher@ct.gov

Flouride in City Water

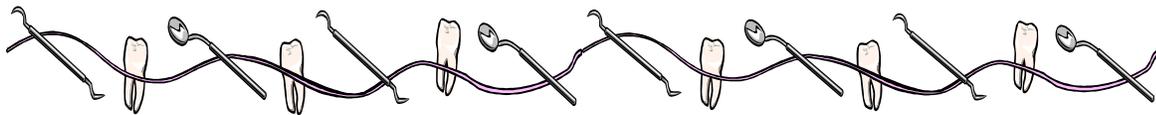


On May 2, 2016 Governor Dannel Malloy, signed the HB5350 bill into law, which aligns Connecticut water fluoride level with US Health and Human Services fluoride recommendation. The recommended level is now officially set at .07 parts per million, but the health benefits have not changed.

Section 1. Section 19a-38 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

A water company, as defined in section 25-32a, shall add a measured amount of fluoride to the water supply of any water system that it owns and operates and that serves twenty thousand or more persons so as to maintain an average monthly fluoride content that is not more or less than 0.15 of a milligram per liter different than the United States Department of Health and Human Services' most recent recommendation for optimal fluoride levels in drinking water to prevent tooth decay.

According to Connecticut Coalition for Oral Health: "Fluoride in water is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay". So, please drink your city water, save money and stay healthy.



UConn Health in Farmington is undergoing major construction of their dental clinics. The dental clinics are open, but the location may be different. For example, Dental Clinic # 5 has moved to Dental Clinic # 3. Emergency and Periodontal Clinics are located in Dental Clinic #1.

As of this writing, please use the elevators that are located on the main floor to get to these clinics. For oral surgery follow signs. If you need help, there are volunteers to help you navigate to the right destination. Please allow for extra time and plan accordingly.

To accommodate the need for dental care UConn has expanded to offer evening hours.

If you need additional information feel free to email me at: izabella.pulvermacher@ct.gov

