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Upfront

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Chewing gum might reduce dental caries

According to researchers, chewing gum could be a dental-protective agent against caries. Researchers at the Department of Dental Public Health Sciences, Northwest/Alaska Center to Reduce Oral Health Disparities, University of Washington emphasized the substance xylitol. The authors researched different types of substances found in chewing gum such as calcium, bicarbonate, carbamide, chlorhexidine, fluoride, and xylitol.

They reviewed and selected clinical investigations and previous reviews using the substances found in chewing gum the previous substances and on their effects on reducing caries. They searched the MEDLINE database using various keywords such as "dental caries" and "oral health" to see if their hypothesis of whether chewing gum is an effective agent in carie prevention match with the substances. The authors found discovered that all of the substances found in gum could be used to strengthen and improve oral health. "These substances exhibit properties that are protective of the oral environment and mediate common oral diseases," the authors said.

The review found a difference of opinion regarding the suitability of recommending chewing gum for caries prevention in children. It is questionable whether advocating chewing gum for dental caries is suitable. Some argue that giving it to young school children would create more choking hazards. and the lack specific dosage recommendations. However, the authors believe that chewing gum could be an effective agent to reduce tooth decay and should be reconsideredommended for children.

According to the study, chewing gum is stimulates saliva flow which cleanses food debris and plaque from teeth. It reduces the chances of gingivitis and periodontitis. In addition, Streptococcus mutans levels and tooth decay decrease.

Study shows graphic health warning pictures might be helpful for cessation

Showing graphic health warning pictures of mouth and throat cancer might be an effective way to stop smokers from smoking, according to an article in the Australian Dental Journal. A study at the University of Padjadjaran in Bandung, Indonesia, aimed to investigate whether showing graphic health warnings would increase the demand for smoking cessation advice in dental practices.

The researchers surveyed 800 dental patients, out of them 152 smoked. A separate survey was given to the patient's dentists. They were asked questions about smoking practices and attitudes toward cessation in the dental practice. The majority of dentists and patients remember seeing graphic health warnings of mouth and throats cancer on television.

After viewing the graphic images, half of the patients reported that they planned to quit within six months. According to the study, 47.7% of them agreed that the graphic warnings made them more likely to quit. Researchers found that the

graphics seemed to increase the patients' awareness and their intention to stop smoking. Dentists were positive towards cessation activities, but believed their patients lacked the motivation to quit smoking.

"Forty percent of smokers would try to quit if asked by their dentists, but only 28.4% preferred a dentist for cessation advice," said the authors. Even though the pictures were effective in awareness, the demand for cessation advice among patients was low. "In general, dentists found no change in demand for smoking cessation advice since the launch of the National Tobacco Campaign in 2006," stated the authors.

ADHA seeks abstracts for Annual Session

American Dental Hygienists' Association is looking for clinician, healthcare providers, educators, researchers and graduate students who have conducted research on an oral health related topic. Abstracts are being solicited for research on oral health and dental hygiene related topics at the Center for Lifelong Learning at Annual Session in Washington, D.C. on June 17-23, 2009.

The posters should pertain to the ADHA National Dental Hygiene Research Agenda. Topics should include the following: health promotion / disease prevention, health services research, professional education and development, clinical dental hygiene care, occupational health and safety.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.adha.org/research/nra.htm>. For the complete call announcement, guidelines for abstract submission and selection criteria, visit: www.adha.org/research.

All abstracts must be submitted by February 18, 2009.