

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Your Mouth and Your Health

Learn how to prevent tooth decay

By Luiz dos Santos, DMD

Tooth decay is a common disease that affects not only children, but also adolescents, and adults, thus its prevention is essential. But once the disease is established, treatment is required to avoid further damage, and even tooth loss.

To better prevent tooth decay you need to understand where and how tooth decay can develop.

There are 3 main places where tooth decay can develop: Occlusal surface, chewing surface of the tooth; Interproximal surface, between teeth; and Buccal/Lingual surface, smooth portion of the tooth.

In kids and adolescents we see tooth decay developing more often on Occlusal, chewing surface,



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and Interproximal, between teeth. On adults, besides Occlusal and Interproximal, we also see on the smooth surface, tooth root - by the gingiva (gums), this is because

with age gingival tissue retracts causing recession – gums away from the tooth, which can expose tooth root to plaque that can cause decay.

How tooth decay develops? When foods containing carbohydrates (sugars and starches) are frequently left on the teeth, bacteria that live in the mouth thrive on such foods producing acids, and as a result causing tooth decay.

Stick foods such as caramels, hard candies, and sugared drinks seem to be the worse. Stick foods stays in contact with tooth surface for a long time, hard candy is usually sucked for a long period of time, and sugared drinks are usually sipped all day. These foods have particular effect on tooth de-

cay because saliva does not enough time to dilute the acid formed by the interaction of bacteria and sugar due to prolonged acid contact to the tooth. Foods that you eat during meal time have practically no effect on tooth decay because they are all part of one acid attack that hopefully the saliva will dilute before the next meal or snack.

Now that you know where and how, you need to know what can be done to prevent and limit tooth decay.

- a. Eat nutritious and balanced meals
- b. Limit tooth to acid exposure by limiting the frequency in which sugary foods are consumed
- c. Brush your teeth twice daily

d. Floss at least once a day to clean between teeth

e. Add mouth wash to your daily oral hygiene routine to help reduce plaque bacteria development

f. Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral examination

g. Check with your dentist about sealants (protective coating) applied to the Occlusal – chewing surface of teeth to protect them from decay.

Until next time with Pregnancy and Oral Health

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Cancer

(Continued from Page 3)

much prefer to have a clean bill of health at that time, this series of events is actually good. Thanks to the wisdom God provides to many in the field of medicine, they have been able to identify very specifically where the disease is in my body so that it can be treated. And yet, a second round of cancer is still frightening.

It's time to go back to those words in Jeremiah, but this time I read the verses leading up to the promise. The people to whom Jeremiah is speaking have been taken captive. They are exiles, forcibly removed from their promised land. This was certainly not in their plans. Rather than spend their lives in bitterness and anger waiting for their release, the Lord gives them these life instructions: *"Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."* Jeremiah 29:5-7

Live life in all its circumstances! Whoever you are, wherever you are, whenever you are, live the life the Lord has given you. My immediate life includes more tests, biopsies, surgery, recovery and life-long medications. My future remains unknown to me other than the promise and assurance the Lord has given. *"Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile."* Jeremiah 29:12-14

My congregation will continue to thrive and prosper, to be inspired and to be inspiring, to pray for this city, to serve with joy. My congregation will live this life it has been given because it is not my congregation, it is the Lord's congregation. I will live this life right now even with cancer because it is the life the Lord has given me. As for the rest of life's concerns, *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* Jeremiah 29:11

Pastor David Drach-Meinel is pastor of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, 2 South Pecos Road in Henderson along with his wife, Pastor Diane Drach-Meinel. They have served their congregation for almost eight years. They have also served congregations in Colorado and Texas. They have two children, Mark, 16, a Junior at Coronado High School and Paul, 19, who has Down Syndrome and goes to work every day at Christ the Servant with Pastor David. Last year, Pastor David Drach-Meinel was diagnosed with cancer, but has not let it slow him down. He continues to lead the congregation along with his wife. For more information about Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, call (702) 492-1418 or visit www.cslconline.org.



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