Blog post for chubmcghee (fiverr) 12/14/11

**Oral Hygiene Tips for Seniors**

Age in and of itself is not a dominant or sole factor in determining oral health. However, certain dental and medical conditions can put many seniors at risk for a number of [oral health](http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/default.htm) problems:

* **Darkened teeth** **.** Caused, to some extent, by changes in dentin -- the bone-like tissue that underlies the tooth enamel -- and by a lifetime of consuming stain-causing foods and beverages.
* [**Dry mouth**](http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/dental-health-dry-mouth)**.** Dry mouth is caused by reduced saliva flow, which can be a result of cancer treatments that use radiation to the head and neck area, as well as certain diseases, such as Sjögren's syndrome, and [medications](http://www.webmd.com/drugs/index-drugs.aspx).
* **Diminished sense of taste** **.** While advancing age impairs the sense of taste, diseases, medications, and dentures can also contribute to this sensory loss.
* **Root decay** **.** This is caused by exposure of the tooth root to decay-causing acids. The tooth roots become exposed as gum tissue recedes from the tooth.
* [**Gum disease**](http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/gingivitis-periodontal-disease)**.** Caused by plaque and made worse by food left in teeth, use of tobacco products, poor-fitting bridges and dentures, poor diets, and certain diseases, such as anemia, cancer, and [diabetes](http://diabetes.webmd.com/default.htm), this is often a problem for older adults.
* **Tooth loss** **.** Gum disease is a leading cause of tooth loss.
* **Uneven jawbone** **.** This is caused by tooth loss.
* **Denture-induced stomatitis** **.** Ill-fitting dentures, poor dental hygiene, or a buildup of the fungus [Candida](http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/tc/thrush-cause) albicans cause this condition, which is inflammation of the tissue underlying a denture.
* [**Thrush**](http://www.webmd.com/content/article/66/79613.htm)**.** Diseases or drugs that affect the immune system can trigger the overgrowth of the fungus Candida albicans in the mouth.

Dry mouth is a warning sign that something is wrong. This condition can be caused by reduced saliva flow resulting from certain diseases and medication side effects. Antihistamines, diuretics, painkillers, high blood pressure medications and antidepressants have been shown to cause dry mouth. Dry mouth leaves the mouth without enough saliva to wash away food and neutralize plaque. This makes you more susceptible to tooth decay and periodontal disease. Your dentist can recommend various methods to restore moisture, including sugarless gum, oral rinses or artificial saliva products.

To maintain good oral health, it's important for all individuals -- regardless of age -- to:

* Brush at least twice a day with a fluoride-containing toothpaste
* Floss at least once a day
* Visit your dentist on a regular schedule for cleaning and an oral exam

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