

## *AWARENESS SERIES*

### *TIPS FOR GOOD ORAL HYGIENE*

#### *PLAQUE, HOW TO GET OF IT*

*Bacteria can live in your mouth in the form of plaque, causing cavities and gingivitis, which can lead to periodontal (gum) disease. In order to keep your mouth clean, you must practice good oral hygiene every day.*

#### *What is plaque?*

*Plaque is a sticky layer of material containing bacteria that accumulates on teeth, including where tooth brushes can't reach.*

*Many of the foods you eat cause the bacteria in your mouth to produce acids. Sugary foods are obvious sources of plaque. But there are others that you might not realize can cause harm.*

*Starches- such as bread, crackers, and cereal- also cause acids to form. Plaque also produces substances that irritate the gums, make them red, sensitive, and susceptible to bleeding. This can lead to gum disease, in which gums pull away from the teeth and form pockets that fill with bacteria and pus.*

*If the gums are not treated, the bone around the teeth can be destroyed and teeth may become loose or have to be removed.*

#### *How can I get rid of plaque?*

*The best way to remove plaque is by brushing and cleaning between your teeth every day. Brushing removes plaque from*

*the tooth surfaces. Brush your teeth twice per day with a soft bristled brush. The size and shape of your tooth brush should fit your mouth and allow you to reach all areas easily.*

*Use an antimicrobial toothpaste containing fluoride, which helps protect your teeth from decay. Clean between the teeth once a day with floss or interdental cleaners to remove plaque from between the teeth, where the tooth brush can't reach. Flossing is essential to prevent gum disease.*

*Also read the articles by the smile expert on brushing and flossing techniques to get to know how to clean your teeth the right way.*

*Is there anything else I can use to clean my mouth?*

*A mouth rinse, in addition to daily brushing and flossing, can increase the cleanliness of your mouth. Antimicrobial mouth rinses reduces bacteria and plaque activity, which cause gingivitis and gum disease.*

*Fluoride mouth rinses also help reduce and prevent tooth decay. Always talk to your dentist about any new products you are interested in trying. Not everyone should use a fluoride mouth rinse. For instance, fluoride rinses are not recommended for children ages 6 or younger because they may swallow them. Always check the manufacturer's label for precautions and age recommendations and talk with your dentist about the use of fluoride mouth rinse.*