How to Protect Your Teeth -- and Your Smile -- in 2011; Tips From Specialized Dentistry of New York

To care for your teeth and your smile, exercise and watch your weight, don't smoke, beware of bagels and sugar, rinse after drinking coffee, tea or red wine, wear seatbelts -- and brush your tongue, advises Specialized Dentistry of New York's team of dental implant and cosmetic dentistry doctors.

New York, NY (PRWEB) December 29, 2010 -- Want to protect your teeth, your gums and your smile in 2011? Then you would do well to watch your weight, exercise, not smoke, keep track of your sugar consumption, beware of bagels, brush or rinse after drinking coffee, tea or red wine, wear seatbelts -- and brush your tongue, advises the team of dental implant and cosmetic dentistry doctors (prosthodontists, periodontists, orthodontists) at Specialized Dentistry of New York (www.sdnyonline.com).

“While proper brushing and flossing, along with regular dental checkups, are your first line of defense, there are important measures you can take that will protect your teeth from being fractured, chipped, discolored -- or lost -- and help assure an attractive, confident smile,” says Specialized Dentistry of New York prosthodontist Dr. Richard Smith:

- Be aware of the foods and beverages that stain teeth, such as coffee, tea, red wine, blueberries, dark sodas, cranberry juice, soy sauce and beets. Brushing your teeth or swirling water around your mouth immediately after eating or drinking these “culprits” can help mitigate their effects.

- Limit how frequently you consume sugar drinks, gum and candies. Sugar lowers the pH (acidity) level in the mouth and the bacteria that cause tooth decay thrive in that environment. Bathing teeth in sugar throughout the day prevents the normal, healthy pH level from being restored. Even dried fruit, eaten as a healthy snack, is full of fructose, which is sugar. And, it’s ironic that sugar mints used to mask bad breath can actually harm teeth.

- Don't smoke. Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to have oral cancer, bad breath, tooth loss, recessed gums and facial wrinkling. And smoking is also a major cause of tooth discoloration.

- One of the surprising benefits of losing excess pounds and getting more exercise in 2011 may be healthier teeth and gums. According the American Academy of Periodontology, research has found that subjects who maintained a healthy body weight and high levels of physical fitness had a lower incidence of severe periodontitis (gum disease). Gum disease attacks the bone and tissues that support the teeth, often resulting in tooth loss.

- Don’t bite down on hard foods, like bones, rock-solid bagels or hard candies. Never use your teeth to crack hard nuts or to chew on ice cubes.
- Remember that teeth are for eating (and smiling) -- not for chewing on pencils, opening packages or lifting off bottle caps.

- It’s hard not to feel stress these days. During sleep, regular grinding, clenching or gnashing the upper and lower teeth (called bruxism and often stress related), can wear down teeth and also harm gums, bone and the jaw. A custom-made hard plastic night guard, fitted by your dentist and worn at night, will act as a protective device, taking pressure off teeth and keeping enamel from breaking down.
- Tooth trauma is a constant danger during contact sports and many recreational activities. The very real potential for tooth injury is almost always present, from basketball, racquet ball, roller and ice skating to volleyball, football, baseball, rollerblading and bicycling. By absorbing much of the force of contact, mouth guards offer essential protection during all these activities. You might even think of them as seatbelts for your teeth. According to the American Dental Association, an athlete is 60 times more likely to suffer harm to the teeth when not wearing a mouth guard.

- Auto accidents are one of the leading causes of tooth injuries. To protect teeth from being fractured, chipped, broken – or lost, always wear seatbelts in cars – and especially in the rear seats of taxis, where hitting the partition during an accident or even a sudden stop can cause disfiguring facial damage.

- Back to brushing. But this time, it's your tongue. Brushing the tongue with a toothbrush, tongue brush or tongue scraper, eliminates many of the bacteria that cause tooth decay. And plaque and food debris allowed to stagnate on the back of the tongue are the leading cause of halitosis, Removing them with a toothbrush or tongue brush is more effective than most mouthwashes in preventing bad breath.

About Specialized Dentistry of New York (www.sdnyonline.com): A one-of-a-kind practice, with a team of specialized dentists, including prosthodontists, periodontists and orthodontists, providing the highest levels of implant dentistry, cosmetic dentistry and aesthetic restorative dentistry in a state-of-the-art Midtown Manhattan dental office, with its own on-site dental laboratory.

The dentists who teach the dentists, they are committed dental educators who hold leadership and teaching positions at the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, the New York University College of Dentistry and at major regional hospitals. Their textbooks, hundreds of articles, lectures in more than 30 countries and research studies have significantly contributed to the art and science of 21st century dentistry.

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