



## **General Home Care Instructions**

The following information is to help you maintain good oral health for your teeth and gums.

- I. First we should describe what causes tooth and gum disease.
  - 1) Plaque is the cause of tooth and gum disease.
  - 2) Plaque is a mixture of sugar, protein and mucous.
  - 3) Plaque is soft and sticky like honey.
  - 4) Plaque forms after you eat sugar or starch (carbohydrates) with sucrose (Sue Krose) causing the worst plaque build-up.
  - 5) Bacteria (germs, bugs) colonize the plaque, eat it and form waste products. That waste is acid in nature.
  - 6) After 30 hours enough bacteria have colonized the plaque to cause inflammation of the gums.
  
- II. The key to maintaining good oral health is **thorough plaque removal.**
  - 1) A systematic approach is critical. Thorough plaque removal requires the use of a system.
  - 2) Whatever tooth surfaces your lip, tongue and cheek can touch, plaque will be removed from these areas. These surfaces are called the self-cleansing areas.
  - 3) Therefore, when cleaning your mouth you should only worry about the areas that are not self-cleansing. There are 3 areas:
    - a) Between the teeth and gums
    - b) In between the teeth
    - c) In the grooves of the teeth
  - 4) A tooth brush can get two of these three areas:
    - a) Between the teeth and gums
    - b) In the grooves of the teeth
  - 5) **Floss is the most effective way to get the plaque off the surfaces in between the teeth.**

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III. Here is some information about your mouth:

- 1) Your mouth has both upper and lower teeth. Each arch has an inside, outside and chewing surfaces which must be cleaned of plaque.
- 2) Start by dry brushing your lower front teeth on the tongue side, this has been shown to be the most effective method for this area of the mouth.
- 3) Pick a corner of your mouth (e.g. back outside right) and continue from there.
- 4) On the outside and inside of your arch there is only one area that needs attention. That area is between the teeth and gums. You need to only concentrate on cleaning this area since the other areas are self-cleansing.
- 5) Angling your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle between the teeth and gums and gently vibrating accomplish efficient plaque removal. **Do not scrub your gums.**
- 6) Then turn the corner. (i.e. go from inside to outside) and use the same 45-degree angle technique on the inside of the arch.
- 7) After you have brushed on the outside and inside of the arch you may scrub away at the biting surfaces to clean the grooves of the teeth.
- 8) Then repeat steps 4, 5, and 6 on the other arch.
- 9) Then brush your tongue, cheeks and palate and you will be done.

**Note: if your tongue is coated, this is caused by “dead taste buds”. Regular brushing of the tongue will improve this situation, freshen your breath and enhance your sense of taste.**

IV. We are then ready to discuss flossing:

- 1) Remember you are flossing to remove plaque, a soft, sticky substance not food. Therefore you must wrap the floss around the sides of each tooth and go up and down the side of the tooth several times.
- 2) Here is how to hold the floss- wrap the floss around your middle finger and control it with your thumbs and fore fingers.
- 3) Remember to only use a back and forth motion to get the floss in between the teeth. If your teeth are not flossed every day, the bacteria will build-up enough to cause inflammation.
- 4) **Flossing is the most effective way to get the plaque off the surfaces in between the teeth.**

V. Finally, challenge yourself to floss for a full week and skip one day. Then taste your mouth at the end of the second day and see if it doesn't taste funny.

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