

Shine Bright

Oral Health for Minority Ethnic (ME) Communities



NEWSLETTER
6TH AUGUST 2020

Hello members,

Hope everyone is well and safe. We are currently still in the Phase 3 of the governments exit plan. This phase had seen many facilities open up. The biggest change will occur when children go back to school from the 11th August 2020 after a long break. There has been a lot of speculation about; will the coronavirus virus remain in control when the children schools reopen and how will it affect the country when children mingle in proximity.

Researchers are constantly working hard to find out about the new Covid 19 virus and working towards making a vaccine to prevent the virus spreading and treating patients affected. Whereas, other scientist actively working on understanding how COVID 19 may associated to oral health. Recently a paper published in the *British Dental Journal* by *Sampson et al* explores the potential connection between poor oral health and COVID-19 complications. They concluded that oral bacteria may play a role in exacerbating COVID-19 infections and enhancing the development of complications such as pneumonia

The coronavirus started as a small number of pneumonia cases with an unknown cause which later found as a new virus named Covid-19.

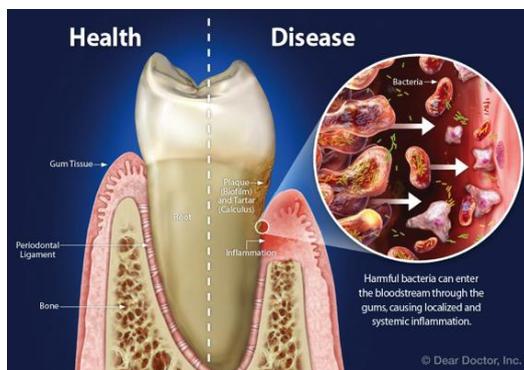
The World Health Organisation (WHO) says 80% of people will suffer only mild cold like symptoms and recover well without needing hospital treatment. But it can develop into a more serious illness such as pneumonia requiring hospitalisation in one in six people.

Pneumonia is a serious respiratory infection of the lungs that can be caused by bacteria or viruses such as the latest Covid-19 where tiny sacs in the lung tissue

become inflamed and fill up with fluid. Common Symptoms include cough, fever, chest pain, difficulty breathing, sweating, and shivering.

We are aware that tooth decay and gum disease are signs of poor oral health but did you know they also increase the risk of a lung infection and pneumonia is linked with poor oral health and gum disease.

In a healthy mouth beneficial bacteria and harmful pathogenic bacteria exist in harmony. A build-up of dental plaque causes an imbalance and the overgrowth of harmful bacteria causes problems for the teeth and gums as well as the rest of the body including the lungs.



Bacteria can enter our lungs when we inhale and they can live and grow there. Our immune systems can usually prevent the bacteria from causing problems but when our immune systems are low or busy fighting off another virus or infection the lungs can become inflamed and there is a risk of it leading to bronchitis or pneumonia. Additionally, it can make chronic lung disease conditions even worse.

Bacteria from dental plaque can lead to periodontal disease; this is advanced gum disease which affects the supporting tissues of the teeth causing the bone around them to break down. When this breakdown occurs, it allows an entry for the bacteria to enter the bloodstream and access the heart and lung tissue.

This bacteria has also been found in the breathing tubes of intubated ventilated patients as when there is a high bacterial load in the mouth it travels down the tubes into the lungs making their condition worse and harder to treat.

However, the good news is that a good oral hygiene routine can help to prevent this from happening and not only will your teeth thank you for it, your body will be so much healthier at the same time.

How it is easy to fall out of our usual routines and this can have a negative effect on our mental health especially during such an unsettling time. Having a routine will help us to feel like we have taken back some control and help to protect our health and wellbeing.

Even though you may be working from home make sure each morning you get out of your pj's and get showered and dressed.

Here are a few things you can do to make sure you are staying healthy:

- Each morning before breakfast brush your teeth at the gum line with a fluoride toothpaste and clean interdentally with floss or brushes.



- Maintain a healthy balanced diet to feel good and keep your immune system strong.
- Avoid snacking or grazing throughout the day particularly on highly processed and sugary foods which will increase the levels of bacteria in your mouth and can cause tooth decay, plus we all know it is no good for our waistlines!

As the lockdown measures continue to ease in Scotland; now it is possible to access a wider range of dental services within your local community. From 13 July, dentists have been able to see patients for routine treatment, but only for non aerosol procedures.

- Whilst you are saving time each day not on the gruelling commute, make sure to get out daily for some fresh air and exercise even if that's just a nice walk, it will still release those endorphins that make us feel great and help reduce stress and anxiety.
- Make sure to get a good quality sleep each night, so try and avoid the temptation to binge on a boxset into the early hours because you do not have
- to get up for work in the morning. Sleep is essential for our bodies to repair and sleep deprivation can have major impact on our physical and mental health.

And do not forget to brush and floss your teeth before you go to bed!

Till next time, stay safe and happy and stay connected!!!!