

Shine Bright

Oral Health for Minority Ethnic (ME) Communities



NEWSLETTER
13TH NOVEMBER 2020

Hello Members,

Hope you are all well and safe. We have reached the end of the year and everyone will agree that 2020 will be remembered for COVID 19 and lockdown. As the country continues to struggle with controlling the virus, the Government has put together a 5 Tier system in October. Earlier this week First Minister had announced that no area in Scotland is in Tier 4 or 5. Most of Scotland is in Tier 3 with some areas in Tiers 1 and 2.

Unlike England we are allowed to have non-essential shops open and restaurants are also allowed to remain open and serve alcohol for sit in till 6pm. If everyone sticks to the guidelines and follows the rules, then we would help control the virus.

Therefore, please avoid unnecessary travel and avoid mixing with other households. Maintain hygiene and wear masks and use hand sanitisers before and after touching surfaces.

In this difficult time, it is even more vital to be aware of our bodies and mind. This week we will discuss the connection between bones and oral health.

Women with osteoporosis are three times more likely to experience tooth loss than those who do not have the disease.

Osteoporosis



Osteoporosis is a bone disease that occurs when the body loses too much bone, makes too little bone, or both. As a result, bones become extremely fragile and less dense. They become weak and may break from a fall or, in serious cases, from sneezing or minor bumps. Osteoporosis means “porous bone.” Women are more at risk of osteoporosis than men, particularly if the menopause begins early (before the age of 45) or they've had their ovaries removed.

Causes of Osteoporosis

Bones are thickest and strongest in your early adult life until your late 20s. You gradually start losing bone from around the age of 35. This happens to everyone, but some people develop osteoporosis and lose bone much faster than normal. This means they're at greater risk of a fracture.

Osteoporosis refers to a disease characterized by bones. The main causes of the problem are aging, menopause, and lack of Vitamin D and calcium.

Osteoporosis affects over 3 million people in the UK. More than 500,000 people receive hospital treatment for fragility fractures (bones that break after falling from standing height or less) every year as a result of osteoporosis.

Signs

There are several warning signs of Osteoporosis:

- Fragility-related fractures. These occur when even mild impact causes a fracture of the wrist, back, hip or other bones.
- Height loss. More than two inches in height can be lost over time.
- Receding gums or tooth loss
- A curved, stooped shape to the spine. ...
- Lower back pain.

Diagnosis

Your dentist may be the first health professional to suspect you have osteoporosis and refer you to a physician. Your dentist may notice symptoms of tooth loss or gum disease that indicate the early stages of osteoporosis. That's one reason why it's

important to visit your dentist regularly and provide your complete medical history, even if you don't think it relates to your oral health. Your medical record provides information about risk factors such as genetics, calcium deficiency, smoking, menopause, excessive caffeine or alcohol intake and an inactive lifestyle.

If your dentist or doctor suspects you have osteoporosis, they can work out your future risk of breaking a bone using an online programme, such as FRAX or Q-Fracture. They may also refer you for a bone density scan to measure your bone strength.

Link between Osteoporosis and Oral Health

Several studies have found a link between the loss of alveolar bone and an increase in loose teeth (tooth mobility) and tooth loss. Osteoporosis can hamper or damage jawbones. It also triggers dental and oral health issues, including gum or periodontal diseases and loss of teeth.

Several other signs may alert your dentist to the possibility of osteoporosis:

- Bone loss in the jaw and around teeth. Bone loss in the mouth may be a sign of bone loss in other parts of the body.
- Tooth loss. People with low bone mineral density tend to lose more teeth.
- Loose or ill-fitting dentures. Bone loss may become so severe that it may be impossible to create functional dentures.
- Periodontitis /Gum disease. This condition contributes to bone loss, and may provide a clue to the diagnosis of an underlying disease such as osteoporosis.

Preventing osteoporosis

If you're at risk of developing osteoporosis, you should take steps to help keep your bones healthy. This may include:

- Taking regular exercise to keep your bones as strong as possible
- Healthy eating – including foods rich in calcium and vitamin D
- Taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D
- Making lifestyle changes – such as giving up smoking and reducing your alcohol consumption

If you or your dentist suspect you have osteoporosis, be sure to visit your primary health care practitioner as soon as possible. New medications are available for prevention and treatment, and early intervention is the key to managing both your oral and overall health.

Till next time stay well, healthy and safe!!