Dental Care Is a No-Brainer

December 5, 2014 By Joseph Burke

Oral hygiene is something we should all be practicing daily, especially those living with Hepatitis C and HIV. I can't express how important it is to stay up-to-date on your dental appointments and cleanings. Digestion starts in the mouth, and if your mouth isn't healthy, then your digestive tract will suffer as well.

Those living with Hepatitis C and/or HIV can develop multiple oral hygiene related issues stemming from improper dental care. Issues ranging from mouth ulcers to the gum disease gingivitis, an irritation and inflammation of the gum line are prominent. People living with Hepatitis C are prone to tooth decay, suffer loss of self-esteem due to poor oral aesthetics and have difficulty with diet due to poor oral health, all leading to a compromised quality of life. An effective preventive care program for a patient diagnosed with HCV is critical and should be an important goal for the dental practitioner.

Follow these simple steps to make your teeth and gums healthy. Even earlier stages of tooth decay can be reversed.

- Gently brush your teeth twice daily using a soft bristled tooth brush and a pea-sized amount of fluoride tooth paste. If your gums bleed when you brush, that's not a bad thing! The more you brush, the healthier your gums will become.
- Spit the tooth paste out, but don't rinse.
- Gently clean between your teeth with dental floss and/or an interdental brush, your dentist can show you how.
- Limit your intake of sugar foods and sodas.
- Chew sugar-fee gum, it stimulates saliva production and neutralizes acids in your mouth.
- Use Fluoride gels. Your dentist may recommend you applying small amounts to your teeth using a toothbrush or dental tray, your dentist can further assist you.

One tip I have just for you, and this is just from my own personal experience in tooth pastes; my dentist recommended me switch to a specialty toothpaste called Pronamel by Sensodyne. About 6

years ago I visited the dentist here in Orlando, FL - and after understanding my health conditions, he recommended this one product to me. I'm not a big fan of product placement in private blogs, but if helps my community of "Dragon Slayers," then I'm going to blog about it. I've been on ProNamel for about 6 years now, and it's radically increased the health of my gums and teeth. Before, living with Hepatitis C caused many random mouth irritations and often times, mouth ulcers, which I frequently got.



I didn't notice much change overnight, but gradually, a year later, my mouth ulcers vanished completely and my teeth were actually becoming healthier. Something I didn't think was possible living with Hepatitis C.

My dentist and I advised a cleaning schedule for me every 6 months with dental X-rays. Being that tooth decay is prominent in patients with Hepatitis C and HIV, I want to do everything I can to prevent that.

One last note, I'm on state funded disability (SSI), which only covers emergency dental procedures. This means in order to get the care I need, I must purchase my own dental plan for the cleaning and X-rays required. I've always had crooked teeth, but never been able to afford to have my teeth straightened properly. My Dentist recommended Invisalign since I was a hemophiliac, but sadly on my budget, I've never been able to have the perfect smile, but that doesn't detour me from taking care of my teeth. I may never have the perfect smile, but at least I'll have healthy teeth regardless!

If anyone has any assistance on other ways to get Invisalign care discounted, I'd love to know about it.

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