

Brush, Floss, Rinse.

Now that you have broken at least half of your New Year's resolutions and we are barely in the middle of January, how about making some that you can keep? Brush, Floss, Rinse. BFR. Very simple to remember, even simpler to do, but with more implications than you think. Read on.

(1) BRUSH: Twice a day...whether you want to or not!

“Plaque forms soon after it is removed. Some studies report that it starts forming as soon as five minutes after it is removed. Other reports state that it can take up to four hours. Regardless of how quickly it begins reforming, effective plaque control will keep it to a minimum. That's why we encourage brushing your teeth twice a day, plus daily flossing. Some people never form calculus while others form it in varying amounts. Some individuals notice it days after a professional dental cleaning, while others hardly form any even months later. The rate of calculus formation is *not* an indicator of the amount and severity of periodontal disease, nor does it indicate that an individual will ever get it. But its continued presence can always damage the gums.”(Park Ave Perio)

(2) FLOSS: No excuses.

“Studies show there is a direct connection between longevity and teeth flossing. Daily flossing can make you 6.4 years younger. “(Marietta Times) There are many floss helpers out there. If you can't use your fingers well...or you have arthritis, etc...the floss holders help quite a bit. There is an electric device called a Hummingbird that oscillates between the teeth. Then the traditional Water Pik is great at removing debris. It can get messy so when used by a caregiver many will have the patient in the shower when the Water Pik is in use. The best electric toothbrush on the market is the Rotadent. It is the only product available that is ADA approved as a brusher and a flosser. ie, it can clean in-between your teeth like floss and on the tooth surface like a brush. Get one and use it.

(3) RINSE: Hold the alcohol, please!

Alcohol containing mouth rinses tend to burn and dry the oral tissue which can be painful and exacerbate dry-mouth symptoms caused by medication or aging. There are more than [500] common medications that cause dry mouth including medication for high blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia, and parkinson's ds. Since many people take these medications we don't need to make the condition worse by adding the wrong mouthwash to the mix. The mouthwash will also dry out teeth and fillings which may shorten the lifespan of either...translated, you may need more fillings done. But the rinses that are ADA approved do help. Some reduce the plaque and calculus buildup, some strengthen enamel with extra fluoride, some reduce sensitivity, etc, etc. Use a toothpaste that hits some of these areas and then a rinse that works on the others.

And why do we care about BFR? Decay and periodontal disease.

“The 2000 Surgeon General Report indicated that 164 million working hours are lost annually due to dental (decay and) pain...” (HIU Magazine) “There are at least 30 bacterial species that may cause and contribute to inflammatory periodontal disease. Periodontal pathogens have been linked with increased risk of systemic illness and complications in existing disease. Numerous articles detailing these findings have been published recently, emphasizing the importance of the association between periodontitis and systemic health problems. By entering the bloodstream, periodontal pathogens have been shown to increase the risk of cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases, and hinder glycemic control in

diabetes.”(Compendium) “Scientists have found that bacteria that grow in the oral cavity can be aspirated into the lung to cause respiratory diseases such as pneumonia, especially in people with periodontal disease. This discovery leads researchers to believe that these respiratory bacteria can travel from the oral cavity into the lungs to cause infection.” (perio.org) There is more, but that is for future newsletters!

So, BFR. Brush, Floss, Rinse. Make it your mantra and your New Year’s resolution that you won’t break. But, to quote Dr. John Thomas, a professor of Pathology and Periodontics at WVU: “Of course, all the flossing and mouth-rinsing in the world isn’t going to save your life if you eat 10 fast food meals a week and drive without your seatbelt – but in the face of all the health advice that experts are bombarding us with, “Brush, Floss and Rinse” isn’t so hard to do.”

BFR. It’s your resolution now.