Get to Know the IFDH
By JoAnn R. Gurenlian, RDH, PhD
The International Federation of Dental Hygiene (IFDH) is an organization designed to represent the interests of dental hygienists worldwide. Originally founded in 1975 by the International Liaison Committee on Dental Hygiene, the organization was formalized in 1986 in Oslo, Norway. Since that time, the IFDH has functioned as an international, non-governmental, non-profit organization that unites dental hygiene associations from around the world in the common cause of promoting oral health.

The purposes of the IFDH include the following:
• Safeguard and defend the interests of the profession of dental hygiene; and
• Promote and advance the profession of dental hygiene.
• Promote professional alliances with its association members as well as with other associations, federal entities, and organizations whose objectives are similar.
• Promote and coordinate the exchange of knowledge and information about the profession, its education, and its practice.
• Promote access to quality preventive oral health services.
• Increase public awareness that oral disease can be prevented through proven regimens.

The IFDH endeavors to provide online resources for dental hygiene colleagues. Our website, www.ifdh.org, provides information on the process of seeking employment in member countries, research and education, national and international meetings of interest, as well as partnerships designed to improve the oral health of the public.

One of our exciting new partnerships is with the Global Child Dental Fund. We are working together to support a social responsibility award focused on improving the oral health of disadvantaged children. This volunteer project is designed to recognize, on an annual basis, dental hygienists and student dental hygienists who participate in a volunteering project which benefits disadvantaged children, mainly, but not exclusively, in low- and middle-income countries. Any dental hygienist who is either an Individual or Student member of the IFDH, or an IFDH Country Member is eligible to apply for the award.

In addition, the IFDH is investigating a partnership with “TestFloss.” This program is an innovative way to promote increased oral home care by texting reminder messages to brush and floss daily. Additional educational information is offered concerning oral care including saliva and the pH of the mouth, heart disease and oral health, stress, and diabetes. There is an app for iOS, iPad, and iPhone with a 5x as well as through iFlosses. apple.com/us/app/iFlosses/id579706527?mt=8.

Every three years, the IFDH hosts an International Symposium on Dental Hygiene, providing an opportunity to network and learn the latest research and technologies supporting the growth of the profession. The next scientific symposium will be held from June 23 to 25, 2016 in Basel, Switzerland. For more information about this meeting, visit http://ifdh2016.dentalhygienists.ch.

We hope you will join us as we work together to improve the oral health of the public and support our profession around the globe!

Contact Information
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Everyday Rinsing: An Essential Routine for Complete Oral Health
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Oral hygiene is an integral component of one’s health and well being. It aids in the prevention of dental problems such as cavities and gum disease. Tooth loss can also be prevented or delayed with proper oral care. But good oral hygiene can do more than just keeping teeth and gums healthy; it can act as a mirror of one’s overall health.

Over the past decades, there has been a mounting interest in the possible interplay between poor oral hygiene and various diseases. A recent study has discovered that periodontal disease is an independent risk factor for proatherosclerotic vascular disease as well as for premature labor and low-birth-weight (PLBW) babies. Decreased lung function, increased severity of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and type 2 diabetes have also been linked to the gum disease. Experts say that poor oral hygiene, although modifiable, is an independent risk factor for oral human papillomavirus (HPV) infection.

Recent studies have also put forth evidence that poor oral hygiene is associated with higher levels of risk of cardiovascular diseases (i.e., heart attack and strokes) and low grade inflammation, although further research needs to be confirmed under the nature of such association.

Oral hygiene must be maintained daily to avoid any oral complications. For this, brushing and flossing must be done twice a day.

Brushing: Brushing the teeth twice a day with a soft-bristled brush is the key to healthy gums and teeth. The size and shape of the brush should fit the mouth to reach all areas easily. Toothbrush should be replaced every three or four months or when the bristles are frayed. A pea-size of fluoride-rich toothpaste may also come in handy.

Flossing: Flossing once a day can help remove plaque from between teeth. It is an important part of the routine as plaque that stays in the mouth can eventually harden into calculus or tartar. Once tartar has formed, professional cleaning may be required for its removal.

However, Brushing and Flossing May Not Be Enough
A strong body of evidence has shown that brushing and flossing are not effective enough to prevent dental caries and periodontal diseases. A trusted mouth wash brand is Listene1, the first over-the-counter mouth rinse that has been awarded the American Dental Association Council on Scientific Acceptance.2 It offers different variants that are especially formulated to achieve ultimate cavity prevention. It contains a fixed combination of 4 different oils (i.e., thymol, menthol, methyl salicylate, and eucalyptol), individually enhancing its antimicrobial properties and flavors, and killing up to 97% of bacteria left behind after brushing and flossing.10 These oils have been clinically proven to offer superior antiseptic and anti-gingivitis efficacy to other medicated mouthrinses.10 Special variants of Listene are available, with Rapid Fusion Technology, which dramatically boosts fluoride uptake and remineralization, and consequently provide extra enamel protection. Another variant, despite having no alcohol content, does not contain menthol.3

Rinsing Can Help Reach What the Basic Routine Cannot
Adding rinsing to the brushing-flossing routine can help reach nearly 100% of the mouth and get rid of bacteria that cause cavities and periodontal diseases. A trusted mouth rinse brand is Listerine4 that has been around since 1914, the first over-the-counter mouth rinse that has been approved by the FDA. Listerine is offered concerning oral care. Stress, and diabetes. There is an app for iOS, iPad, and iPhone with a 5x as well as through iFlosses. apple.com/us/app/iFlosses/id579706527?mt=8.

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