Halitosis reaches 2.5m

One in five Britons think their partner has bad breath and nearly half the population think that a friend or colleague has it, according to a study by the British Dental Health Foundation.

Bad breath affects over 2.5m people in the UK. All of us get it from time-to-time but for others it can be a big problem.

It is important that dental professionals give the right advice to patients in order to combat the problem.

A spokesperson for the British Dental Health Foundation said: "It’s a very common problem and there are many different causes. Persistent bad breath is usually caused by the smelly gases released by the bacteria that coat your teeth and gums. Bits of food that get caught between the teeth and on the tongue will rot and can sometimes cause an unpleasant smell. So correct and regular brushing is very important to keep your breath smelling fresh."

He added: "However, strong foods like garlic, coffee and onions can add to the problem. The bacteria on our teeth and gums (plaque) also cause gum disease and dental decay. One of the warning signs of gum disease is that you always have bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth. Again, your dentist or hygienist will be able to see and treat the problem during your regular check-ups. The earlier the problems are found, the more effective the treatment will be."

The BDHF also stresses the importance of regular check-ups as it allows the dentist to watch for any areas where plaque is caught between the patient’s teeth.

‘Your dentist or hygienist will be able to clean all those areas that are difficult to reach. They will also be able to show you the best way to clean your teeth and gums, and show you any areas you may be missing, including your tongue,’ advised the BDHF spokesperson.

Vending machine clearout

Fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolates and crisps have been banned from vending machines in hospitals in South Wales from the beginning of November. The new guide lines issued by the Welsh Assembly Government ban junk food from being sold in the machines.

Health Minister Edwina Hart announced the ban on junk food in hospital vending machines in April - and details of what can be sold have now been sent to NHS trusts.

The ban includes all chocolates and chocolate biscuits, sweets, including mints, crisps, but baked snack products will be allowed. All fizzy drinks and those with added sugar are banned. However yoghurt, milk drinks and smoothies are allowed if they meet strict nutritional rules.

The British Dental Health Foundation said the move would help to prevent tooth decay. Dr Nigel Carter, chief executive of the Dental Health Foundation, said: "Sugar products taken between meals are the main cause of tooth decay, which can lead to fillings and extractions. Your teeth are under acid attack and risk of decay for up to an hour each time you eat sugary products."

‘Pour diet has also been linked with gum disease, which not only threatens tooth loss, but overall health. Research is proving time and time again that gum disease is linked to diabetes, heart disease, strokes and premature and low birth-weight babies.’

As part of the changes, the vending machines will not be allowed to promote foods or drinks high in fat, sugar or salt or brands associated with such products. Tina Donnelly, director of the Royal College of Nurses in Wales, said: ‘We are pleased that unhealthy snacks will be removed from vending machines in hospitals.

‘People who use vending machines for convenience do not always have the ability to choose healthy options so this new guidance will ensure that better choices are available.’

Communication combats stress

Good communication between the patients and the dental team leads to reduced stress and fewer complaints, according to Smile-on which has just launched its communication in dentistry programme.

Smile-on, which provides educational resources for the dental industry, has joined forces with Dental Protection Limited (DPL) to run the three-module programme Communication in Dentistry: Stories from the Practice.

A spokeswoman for Smile-on said: ‘With this groundbreaking programme, the entire dental team can enjoy the benefits of a happy working environment by implementing practical communication techniques.

Better lines of communication with patients and between members of the dental team leads to reduced stress and fewer complaints. This means less legal claims and greater financial success for your business.’

Other educational courses for dental professionals on offer from Smile-on include DINSTART, a method to deliver crucial knowledge to dental nurses, a Clinical Photography course and Clinical and Governance Progress Management.

It also recently announced its new series of Webinars with Dr Julian Webber, former British Endodontic Society president, Christine Pleasance, former British Dental Hygienists’ Association president (now the British Society of Dental Hygiene & Therapy) and Patrick Holmes, a leading lecturer in Contemporary Aesthetic Dentistry.

For more information on any of these courses please call 020 7400 8989 or email info@smile-on.com.

Thieving dentist is up for fraud

A dentist in Carmarthenshire has been struck off after fraudulently claiming nearly £38,000 from the Dental Practice Board for National Health Service from the Dental Practice Board, received a large sum of money.

Mr Johnson’s capacity as a dentist.

Mr Johnson was convicted of dishonesty and breach of trust in 2004.

The Committee said it did consider written testimonials, which he had not produced, ‘according to the report by the Dental Practice Board for National Health Service from the Dental Practice Board, received a large sum of money.

Mr Johnson is estranged from the Dental Council (GDC).

He dishonestly claimed and received a large sum of money from the Dental Practice Board for National Health Service from the Dental Practice Board.

The Committee considered that this was a case of very serious dishonesty and breach of trust in Mr Johnson’s capacity as a dentist.

The report added that ‘the Committee is concerned that, to date, Mr Johnson has shown little or no insight or remorse into his conduct and that he took two years to acknowledge his guilt.’

The Committee said it did consider written testimonial letters produced by Mr Johnson’s professional colleagues and patients and noted there were no criticisms of his clinical abilities.