Howard Stean’s dentistry classes

When you walk into Howard Stean’s Edwardian house in west London, it is like walking into a tardis.

Inside is his home, his surgery and right on the top floor is a classroom for teaching dentistry.

The classroom is on the top floor

The classroom, which has just been built, seats about 20 students who come from all over the UK to attend courses he runs on aesthetic and restorative dentistry.

Mr Stean, who calls himself a pioneer in the UK for aesthetic dentistry is founder and chairman of ADAPT (aesthetic dentistry and professional testing) which evaluates new and improved materials and techniques.

Mr Stean decided to build the classroom as he had been teaching his courses on aesthetic dentistry in his lounge and felt he needed somewhere a bit more formal.

I was limited by space so now I can take more students. I can also have proper teaching resources in the classroom and she can sit in comfort and learn. Having a dedicated teaching room means the students are not so distracted and can concentrate much better.

Aesthetic and restorative dentistry is changing all the time and is constantly being updated so I am always revising the course, he says.

The students are of varying levels however they are all qualified. Some are newly qualified and some have been qualified for many years, he says.

The people on the course come once a month for six months. It is a full day, which runs from 9am through till 5pm, and they even get a ‘home-made’ supper.

Students attending on Bonfire Night this year were even treated to a special fireworks display in Mr Stean’s back garden.

Mr Stean has been involved in restorative dentistry for over 25 years and has a private referral practice in Kew, West London.

Primary Care Trust champions in Bolton have asked NHS Northwest to look at the costs and practicalities of adding fluoride to water in the town.

Bolton was one of three towns in Greater Manchester which had not asked NHS North West to come up with a fluoridation plan, but the Primary Care Trust board has now decided to officially submit its request.

Alison Merry, consultant in dental public health for Bolton PCT, said: ‘Levels of dental decay are much worse in Bolton compared to the rest of England. We want to do all we can to improve this. Before any new fluoridation scheme can be introduced a set process needs to be followed and a public consultation would be held.’

She added: ‘But we are not at that stage yet as more work first needs to be done to look at the costs and practicalities of adding fluoride to the local water supply.’

If all of Greater Manchester’s 10 PCT’s decide to go ahead, then a public consultation will be launched late next year.

Fluoride for Bolton?

NHS North West is looking at extending water fluoride – as part of a push by the government to fluoridate more of England.

Currently, about 10 per cent of England’s water is fluoridated – mainly in the north east and the West Midlands. The government wants to fluoridate nearly half of England, according to the Chief Dental Officer (CDO).

Barry Cockcroft, the government’s CDO, said: ‘Areas with high levels of caries are considering it. We only need to fluoridate 40 per cent of the country.’

Southampton is the first area to hold a consultation on the issue and this is already underway. Fluoridation was first introduced into the UK in the 1960s when areas in and around Birmingham and Newcastle were fluoridated, along with the Republic of Ireland.

The government has set aside £42m over three years to strategic health authorities who decide after consultation to introduce fluoridation schemes.

Critics such as the National Pure Water Association and the Green Party are opposed to the plan and link it with diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer’s disease.

However Dr Cockcroft dismissed the ‘scare mongering that says it causes cancer’ and said: ‘All the water in this country contains some fluoride. So we have hit it for generations and there is no evidence linking fluoride with systemic disease. The only thing that is connected with fluoridation is dental fluorosis and that only occurs in a tiny minority of children.’

Berries beat oral cancer

The British Dental Health Foundation has welcomed a study that has found blueberries, papaya, and blackberries potentially reduce the risk of developing oral cancer.

Researchers from Hong Kong University published the article concerning the properties of these fruit in the Journal of Cancer Research. They found that lupeol is a terpenene compound abundantly found in these fruits and exhibits anti-cancer properties by blocking NFkB, a naturally occurring protein, which assists cell growth.

The study concluded that lupeol suppresses the spread of cancer and reduces tumor size three times faster than cisplatin (a platinum-based chemotherapy drug).

Dr. Nigel Carter, chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, said: ‘We already knew that a healthy diet, including at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, could reduce a person’s risk of developing mouth cancer. However, the news that certain fruits might actually help to combat mouth cancer in people who have already developed the condition is a real revelation.’

He added: ‘It is true that this research is still in its very early stages. However, this suggestion is that the lupeol compound could be more effective than traditional drugs in preventing the growth of mouth cancer.

In the UK, oral cancer has a mortality rate of one person every five hours.

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