



Parish Health News

Dental Health and Beyond

Have you taken a good look at your gums lately? Here's something you should know. While rose colored cheeks might be a sign of good health, rose colored gums are not. Gums are supposed to be firm and pale pink. Red, puffy gums may be an indication of gingivitis.



Gingivitis often does not cause much pain so can be easy to ignore. Other symptoms include puffiness, maybe a bit of bleeding when brushing, bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth. These don't seem like serious symptoms but they can be big warning signs.

Plaque and Tartar are words thrown about in TV commercials but do you really know what they mean? Plaque is a sticky film that forms when the bacteria normally found in your mouth comes into contact with starches and sugars in the food you eat. Plaque is removed by thoroughly flossing and brushing. It needs to be removed at least daily, preferably twice daily. Plaque will eventually harden into tartar. Tartar is more difficult to remove and usually requires a professional dental cleaning to get the job done.

So what's the big deal about Tartar? Well, tartar forms a barrier that protects the bacteria. The bacteria then gets to have a party at your expense. This bacterial party can result in gingivitis and gingivitis can lead to periodontitis, something more serious yet. Periodontitis can damage the soft tissues and even corrode the supporting bone structures. Periodontitis may also be associated with an increased risk for heart and lung disease, strokes, premature births and more. No one needs those kinds of issues.

Good oral health and regular dental checkups are important. Some other factors may contribute to your risk of periodontitis such as hormonal changes, aging, substance abuse, illnesses that affect your immune system, certain medications, dry mouth, heredity and tobacco use. Obviously you have no control over some of these factors but a few risk factors can be lessened or avoided. Talk with your dentist about any concerns you may have.



Smile with confidence!

Sue Struck, RN

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Dear friend I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.