

WORD of MOUTH[®]

A Semiannual Publication of the Massachusetts Dental Society

Winter - Spring 2014

MASSACHUSETTS
DENTAL SOCIETY
CELEBRATING
150
Years
1864 - 2014

Bring in
Da Brush,
Bring in
Da Fun





www.massdental.org
(800) 342-8747

The Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) is pleased to make this publication available to our member dentists as a way of communicating important oral health information to their patients.

Information in **WORD OF MOUTH** articles comes from dental health care professionals of the MDS and other leading professional dental organizations, including the American Dental Association. If you have any questions about specific content that may affect your oral health, please contact your dentist. For timely news regarding oral health, visit the "For the Public" section of the MDS website at www.massdental.org.

Your comments and suggestions regarding **WORD OF MOUTH** are always welcome. All correspondence and requests for additional copies may be forwarded to Melissa Carman, Director of Publications, Massachusetts Dental Society, Two Willow Street, Suite 200, Southborough, MA 01745-1027, or email mcarman@massdental.org.

Copyright © 2014 The Massachusetts Dental Society

Robert E. Boose, EdD, *Executive Director*

Scott G. Davis, *Chief Communications Officer*

Melissa Carman, *Director of Publications*

Jeanne M. Burdette, *Manager, Graphic Design*

Shelley Padgett, *Graphic Designer*

Jennifer Hanlin, *Administrative Coordinator*

Also in This Issue:

Oral Care for Patients with MS	4
WORD OF MOUTH Word Search	5
The MDS Celebrates Its 150th Anniversary	6
Your Teeth Are What You Eat	8
Tooth "Picks"	9
Getting "Real" About Tobacco	10



Bring in Da Brush, Bring in Da Fun



As a parent of young children, you may already be used to playing the role of taskmaster: "Eat your peas." "Go to sleep." As important as it is to make sure that your children get nutritious meals and plenty of sleep to help them grow into healthy adults, you also need to remember the importance of good oral health, and that includes brushing their teeth for two minutes twice a day. Although instilling this healthy habit in young children can often be a frustrating endeavor for parents, it is possible to show kids that brushing doesn't have to be a chore. Here are some tips for bringing the fun to toothbrushing.

Monkey See, Monkey Do

The first thing you can do is to lead by example: Show your children that brushing is both fun and part of your daily life. Let them see you brushing (and flossing!) regularly. And don't forget that smiles are contagious, so smile before and after you brush and your children will learn to do the same. You can even make it a group effort, so they know that when Mommy and Daddy brush their teeth, it's time for them to brush, too.



Choice Equals Happiness

Another tip for making brushing fun is to empower your children. This means letting them pick out their own toothbrush, in the color and style of their choosing. Many children's toothbrushes feature cartoon characters, so let Scooby-Doo or Phineas and Ferb help you make brushing more fun. Just make sure it's a soft-bristled brush, as anything firmer can damage the tooth enamel. Don't forget that kids



are drawn to bells and whistles, so if they are old enough for a battery-powered brush that vibrates, has a built-in timer, or plays songs (many feature known pop songs in the desired two-minute increment for ideal oral health), why not give it a shot? Battery-powered brushes can be purchased in most drugstores and supermarkets for less than \$10, which is money well spent if it means your child is excited about brushing.

In addition to letting kids pick out their own toothbrush, let them have a say in what flavor toothpaste they use—just be sure it’s fluoridated for maximum anti-cavity protection. (Unless recommended by your child’s dentist, do not begin using a fluoridated toothpaste until the age of 2, and then use only a pea-sized amount. Children should be taught to spit out toothpaste and rinse with water after brushing.) Children’s toothpastes come in a variety of flavors, from bubblegum to fruity flavors like strawberry or mango and even chocolate. So when you’re picking out a new tube of toothpaste, allow your children to choose their favorite flavor. If they like the taste, they’ll be more likely to brush again. You can even buy a couple of different flavors and surprise them with a new one each week (“This week’s flavor is bubblegum!”) to make them look forward to brushing.

Game On

It’s no secret that children like to play, so why not make their toothbrushing a game? It can be as simple as creating a brushing chart on poster board or colored paper, affixing it to a wall, and placing a fun sticker or good old-fashioned gold star on the chart after brushing and flossing are complete each morning and night. At the end of a month of healthy brushing habits, you can give your child a small reward—such as a book.

A more high-tech way to introduce kids to the importance of good oral health and the role toothbrushing plays comes courtesy of the Ad Council and the Partnership for Healthy Mouths,



Healthy Lives (a consortium that includes the American Dental Association), which recently released the new mobile gaming app called “Toothsavers.” This free app, which is available for Apple and Android devices, is geared toward 3- to 6-year-olds, who will try to rescue fairy-tale characters from an evil cavity-creating sorceress, who has cast a teeth-rotting spell on the kingdom. In “Toothsavers,” kids use a timed finger-swipe brushing motion to save the characters from cavities. The app also includes a two-player version of the game that allows the kids to “brush” the teeth of their friends or parents when the mobile device is held up to their mouths. And perhaps its best feature is a helpful real-life toothbrushing companion for children and parents to track brushing progress, as well as provide morning and nighttime brushing reminders.

Use Your Words

Lastly, enthusiasm is contagious, so praise your children for doing a good job of brushing their teeth and let them know that you are proud of them for their efforts. Compliment them on how awesome and shiny their teeth look, and encourage them to show off their smile.

Good Job!

By reinforcing the importance of toothbrushing as part of your children’s daily routine, you can show them that brushing can be fun and help them get on the path to a lifetime of good oral health.



Oral Care for Patients with MS

More than 2.3 million people worldwide suffer from multiple sclerosis (MS), according to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS), and the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation reports that an estimated 400,000 Americans may be affected by MS. As with any chronic disease, the oral health implications can be quite serious. Research has shown that MS patients have a 21 percent increased risk for developing cavities, and patients who are severely physically compromised may be at risk for plaque buildup, resulting in periodontal disease. According to the NMSS, people with a chronic disease are especially at risk of neglecting their general health and wellness, including oral care. In addition, MS patients with advanced physical limitations may have difficulty tolerating dental treatment, which makes good oral home care that much more important. If you or a family member suffers from MS, you should be aware of the importance of maintaining good oral health as part of your overall health and MS care.

Widely considered an autoimmune disease, MS is a serious and chronic malady of the central nervous system affecting the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves. It can cause vision problems (including blindness), loss of balance, muscle weakness, poor coordination, slurred speech, tremors, numbness, extreme fatigue, difficulty with memory and concentration, and paralysis. Symptoms vary from person to person, and may come and go over the course of a patient's life. Major symptoms may disappear completely in some patients while others may progress, resulting in severe disability. Currently, there is no cure for MS and treatment usually focuses on symptom management and relapse prevention. Many MS treatments involve immunosuppressants, which can lower a patient's resistance to both viral and bacterial infections; thus dental work with MS patients should be undertaken in consultation with an MS specialist.

Recognizing the importance of oral health for the MS population, the NMSS offers some tips to help these patients more easily maintain their oral hygiene:

- Use toothbrushes with built-up handles, or cut a small slit in the side of a tennis ball and slide it onto the handle of the toothbrush; use flossing tools; or consider electric or battery-powered toothbrushes and flossing devices
- Sit down to brush and floss if standing at the bathroom sink is too tiring
- Floss in the morning if you are too tired at night
- Allow a caregiver (e.g., family member or personal assistant) to help with brushing and flossing if it's too difficult to manage on your own
- Manage tremors by wearing a weighted glove while brushing and flossing

Because MS symptoms vary so widely, they are not always recognizable to others, so patients should be sure to inform their dentist and dental team that they have MS, as the dentist and dental hygienist may be able to cater treatment to make the patient more comfortable. For example, dental professionals may want to shorten the duration of the office visit if the patient is uncomfortable sitting for long periods of time. The dentist should also be aware of all medications MS patients are taking, as many of them have oral side effects. The most common oral side effect is xerostomia (also known as dry mouth), which occurs when the salivary glands do not produce enough saliva. In addition to causing discomfort, dry mouth can increase the risk of developing tooth decay and gum disease. Adequate saliva levels in the mouth are critical to good oral health because saliva helps wash away food particles that stick to teeth and gums and that can lead to tooth decay.

MS can complicate a patient's life, but oral health problems shouldn't be among those complications. That's why it's important for MS patients to take charge of their oral hygiene and include their dentist as part of their overall treatment team.

To maintain your oral health over the course of your lifetime, you may encounter a variety of dental professionals. In addition to a general dentist, you may see specialists, such as an orthodontist to straighten your teeth or an endodontist if you need a root canal. A dental hygienist may perform your semiannual cleaning, and a dental assistant helps the dentist with dental procedures. See if you can find all 10 of these oral health professionals in the puzzle below.

DENTAL ASSISTANT

DENTAL HYGIENIST

ENDODONTIST

GENERAL DENTIST

ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON

ORTHODONTIST

PEDIATRIC DENTIST

PERIODONTIST

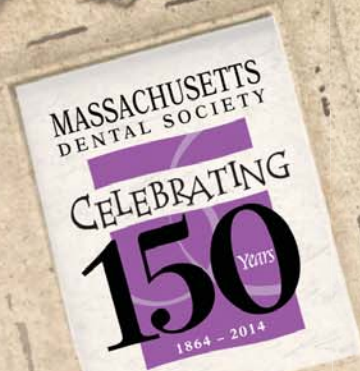
PROSTHODONTIST

PUBLIC HEALTH DENTIST



A G W J E Q D P O B W G I U L T C N L P D Z A
 J I D T L W T Y R R K R L G I S E F N E A B G
 C Y E S S P R C A H E N T N V I H J R D P N I
 A R N O V Y E Z L Y A S F P D T K & S I Y E F
 S E T I U S I E & M I E T R E N L U Q A D I Z
 X P A R B L P I M E F S D Z L O W D L T X R U
 X L L K I R L O A S V F A T A D N F D R T B L
 T E H X N C S P X U A Q R U A O D I E I E T P
 S C Y N H O C X I H P E H W & H G R P C P N A
 I X G E N E R A L D E N T I S T J H K D R A I
 T P I Y U N & V L R F Z Y L Q R T W N E T T H
 N A E L D D B N O V R A G A E O E L T N & S N
 E H N U Q O O E F J R R I S K J R P I T L I O
 D N I H K D K A A M F G P N Y W Y D S I J S R
 H U S J W O B W C I O T R P L B U X R S W S M
 T L T I B N O H I R I P S M Q N X C M T B A F
 L Q K R I T K I A W S E U I U L W Y J V E L K
 A E M Z S I J L L Q P J L U T R S D H C O A M
 E S B O W S R D S A K P M J N N E I A E L T B
 H H U N G T E S U Q V N D Y B Q O A I N H N E
 C L E O V A E S R K Z R W P D E N D U T I E O
 I E A Y P N P K G P G A S R E K D L O S P D N
 L I O A J Q A F E Z I F C T W F R M K I G A G
 B D T R X I C L O R L J P N R T T M L R R N U
 U E M V T S I T N O D O H T S O R P Z K F E J
 P R Z C E F U A I V U D O E I R Q N C W I D P

The Massachusetts Dental Society Celebrates Its 150th Anniversary



Over the last century and a half, the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) has evolved from a dozen dentists convening to share knowledge and information into an organization of nearly 5,000 dentists that strives to meet the needs of its members and advocate for better oral health for the residents of the Commonwealth. The Society's mission statement sums it up: "The Massachusetts Dental Society is the organization dedicated to improving the oral health of the public and professional development of its membership through initiatives in education, advocacy, and promotion of the highest professional standards." And in 2014, the MDS is celebrating its 150th anniversary, which is also known as a Sesquicentennial. In these 150 years, the MDS has made a difference in the lives of the citizens of Massachusetts by helping improve their oral health and access to care. Let's take a look back at the Society's founding and some of its achievements on behalf of the public.

THE EARLY DAYS

In the 1850s, a small group of self-taught or apprenticed dentists would cross paths at a dental supply house in the Tremont Building on Tremont Row in Boston, and it was here that they would meet to exchange trade secrets and dental techniques. In 1864, they decided to form an organization, which was called the Massachusetts Dental Association. They held their first official meeting in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in the Tremont Temple in Boston on March 4, 1864. In 1865, the organization would incorporate as the Massachusetts Dental Society.

Over the following 150 years, the MDS would grow not only in stature, but also in size. In that first year, there were 27 members from Boston and surrounding communities as far away

as Worcester. By 1914 (the MDS's 50th anniversary), there were 1,437 members, and that number more than doubled in 50 years to 3,226 members in 1964, the Society's Centennial. Today, the MDS is proud to represent nearly 5,000 dentists in the Commonwealth, which is 80.7 percent of all dentists in the state.

In 1913, the MDS became a component member of the National Dental Association, which would become the American Dental Association (ADA) in 1922. For more than 100 years, the MDS and the ADA have been dedicated to educating the public on the importance of oral health using a variety of communications vehicles, such as TV and radio commercials, brochures, and this publication you're reading, *WORD OF MOUTH*. During this time, nine MDS members have gone on to serve as ADA President, the most recent being MDS Past President Dr. Robert Faiella, a periodontist in Osterville and Duxbury. In 1936, another member, Dr. Leroy Miner, became the only ADA President and MDS Past President to ever appear on the cover of *Time* magazine.

THE MDS AND EDUCATION

The MDS has always been a proponent of education. Early MDS members, including Past Presidents Dr. Nathan Cooley Keep and Dr. Luther D. Shepard, had a leading role in organizing the United States' first university dental school in 1867. Dr. Keep, a medical doctor with an honorary dental degree from the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, had suggested that Harvard University should establish a course in dentistry and add professorships in dentistry at Harvard Medical College. That suggestion evolved into the formation of Boston's first dental school, Harvard Dental School, which is now known as the Harvard School of Dental Medicine. One year later, MDS members would again play a role in the formation of another area dental school with the founding



N. C. KEE
M.D., D.D.S.
First President



of the Boston Dental College, now Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. Today, Boston is known and respected in the dental profession for being home to three of the best dental schools in the country (the third Boston dental school, Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine, was established in 1963).

In addition to strong relationships with these university dental schools that educate the next generations of dentists, the MDS also provides a multitude of continuing education offerings for dentists, dental assistants, and dental hygienists in Massachusetts. These courses are held year-round at the Society headquarters in Southborough and every January in Boston at the MDS's annual conference, the Yankee Dental Congress, which is the fifth-largest dental conference in the United States. By offering these continuing education opportunities, the MDS is helping members stay current on treatment techniques and technology, which helps them provide the best treatment possible for their patients.

THE MDS ADVOCATES FOR ORAL HEALTH

Over the years, the MDS has been one of the strongest advocates for the oral health of Massachusetts residents by proposing legislation and testifying in opposition to bills that its members feel would endanger the public health. The Society has played an active role in community water fluoridation in 140 Massachusetts public water systems. (Fluoride has been proven to be a safe and effective natural cavity fighter that protects teeth.) For years, the MDS has produced public awareness programs to educate the public, including campaigns on the systemic and oral health dangers of tobacco and smokeless tobacco and the importance of wearing mouthguards when playing contact sports.

The Society has also been especially concerned with the oral health of the underserved population, those who can't access or afford oral care. In 1999, the MDS formed the MDS Foundation with the goal of increasing access to care for low-income individuals. Through member donations and fundraising events, the MDS Foundation provides grants to organizations that increase access to dental care for underserved individuals in Massachusetts. In the last four years alone, the MDS Foundation has bestowed grants totaling nearly \$400,000 to various Bay State organizations.

The MDS has successfully lobbied for expansion of the MassHealth dental program, including the reinstatement of all adult MassHealth benefits, which were significantly reduced in 2011. (These benefits were partially reinstated in 2013 and additional adult benefits were added in 2014.) The Society has also sought to increase the number of dentists participating in MassHealth as a means to increase access to care, and member participation has nearly doubled in the past five years, in spite of the previous cutbacks in the MassHealth adult benefits. In addition, the MDS has been working on behalf of the state's littlest residents by raising awareness of the importance of age-one dental visits.

Besides striving to help Massachusetts residents achieve good oral health, the MDS has also sought to keep them safe. Recognizing the role that dental providers play in identifying and reporting instances of abuse and neglect, the Society became one of the first dental associations to call attention to abuse and neglect by forming a committee to address the issue in 1976. MDS members have also participated in the Child Identification Program (CHIP) since 1998, taking "Toothprints" of kids' teeth that law enforcement authorities can use to find and identify a lost or missing child.

As you can see, over the past 150 years, the Massachusetts Dental Society has become so much more than a member association. The MDS has been instrumental in helping the residents of the Commonwealth understand the importance of maintaining good oral health and has fought to give them access to oral health care.

And that's something to celebrate.



Your *Teeth* Are What You Eat

No doubt you've heard the saying "You are what you eat," which means that a healthy and balanced diet high in vitamins and nutrients—and low in junk food—will help you maintain a healthy body and stave off illness. Your diet provides your body with the fuel it needs to run at its optimum, so if you are filling your tank with a diet heavy in sugary and fatty foods (e.g., fast food) instead of nutrient-rich vegetables and lean proteins, you're doing yourself a disservice. A poor diet can lead to weight gain, high blood pressure, digestive problems, and increased risk of illnesses. And did you know that your diet also affects the health of your teeth and gums?

How does what you eat impact your oral health? When you eat anything, the bacteria that are already present in your mouth convert the sugar and starch in this food into acids, which attack the enamel on your teeth and cause tooth decay. The more often you eat foods that contain sugars and starches, and the longer these foods remain in your mouth before you brush your teeth, the greater your risk for tooth decay. That's why it's important to brush your teeth after every meal, ideally, to brush away any food particles that may be clinging to or in between your teeth.

Kick the Sweet and Starchy Habit

You know that eating nonnutritious foods and drinking beverages that have a high sugar content—such as sodas and sweetened fruit juices—can cause cavities and lead to tooth decay. What you may not realize is that, even if you swear off the candy and soda, sugar can still creep its way into your diet and silently chip away at your oral health.

Besides serving as a natural ingredient in fruit and an added ingredient in cereal, soda, and sports drinks, sugar also lurks in some foods you wouldn't think of, such as milk, yogurt, salad dressing, ketchup, and even some vegetables (such as carrots, corn, and onions). Fruit juices can be loaded with sugar and sometimes contain only trace amounts of actual fruit. Even those granola or nutritional bars that you snack on to hold you over until dinner can sometimes be nothing more than a glorified candy bar.

Starch is another element in food that, when combined with the bacteria in your mouth, can wreak havoc with your teeth and gums, so you'll want to be aware of how much starch you consume. Some of the more common examples of starchy foods are bread and rolls, cereal, pasta, and beans. But like sugar, starch can also be found in unexpected places, such as fruit (bananas), canned soup, prepared spaghetti sauce, salad dressings, and even some vegetables (such as potatoes, corn, and peas).



So if your teeth are what you eat, what can you do to ensure better oral health and overall health?

- **It's not just *what* you eat, it's *when* you eat.** Try to limit the amount of sugary and starchy foods you consume, especially between meals when you are least likely to brush after eating. If you do snack between meals, brush with fluoride toothpaste immediately.
- **Read the nutritional labels** on the foods you buy, and watch out for how much hidden sugar and starch you are actually consuming.
- **Snack on healthier fare.** Some good choices include cheese, vegetables, and fruit. Crunchy fruit contains sugar, but it also has a high water content, which dilutes the effects of the sugar and stimulates the flow of saliva, an aid in washing away food particles.
- **Watch what you drink.** Try to limit your intake of soda and fruit juices, and drink plenty of water, which will help rinse any food particles from between your teeth. And if you're drinking bottled water, pay close attention to what's in—or isn't in—the water. Not all bottled water is fluoridated.
- **Take a daily multivitamin** to ensure that you are getting all the nutrients your body needs. Calcium and vitamin D are essential for good tooth and bone development.

Just some food for thought . . . and your teeth.



TOOTH "PICKS"

Baby Teeth Bling



For years, parents have been bronzing their baby's first pair of shoes or booties, or plastering their baby's handprints to serve as a memento of their child's infancy. But now a new keepsake token may be giving bronze and plaster a run for their money in the baby memento department: baby teeth jewelry. This new trend, which was featured recently on ABC's *Good Morning America*, finds mothers having their baby's teeth turned into either a necklace or a charm bracelet. Squeamish moms who may balk at the idea of wearing teeth around their necks can opt to have molds made of the teeth in sterling silver or gold and have those turned into an accessory. With more and more moms jumping on this trend and handing over their baby's teeth to a jeweler, will this mean less work for the Tooth Fairy?

Teeth: Top Target for Bullies

Bullying among adolescents and teenagers has increased to epidemic proportions in recent years, mainly due to the advent of social media, like Facebook and Twitter, and it can leave harmful and lasting effects, such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Kids may be targeted for bullying for a variety of reasons: everything from shyness to weight to socioeconomic class to physical appearance, including their teeth. A recent study in the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics* found a significant prevalence of bullying related to students' dental and/or facial appearance. The study of 920 children in the country of Jordan revealed that teeth were the number-one targeted physical feature for bullying, with half of the children identifying their dental appearance as the cause of the bullying. The American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) released a statement that a panel of 12 high-ranking AAO members reviewed and concurred with the study's findings, and indicated that the experiences of the Jordanian children can easily translate to the experiences of American kids, as many orthodontists have treated young patients who were teased or bullied because of their teeth. The AAO believes that early orthodontic treatment on a child being bullied for his or her dental appearance can have a major beneficial psychological effect on the child.



Diamonds Are a Tooth's Best Friend

Diamonds are forever, according to James Bond author Ian Fleming, but are they also the future of dental implants? Maybe, say researchers from the UCLA School of Dentistry, who have discovered that nanodiamonds could be used to promote bone growth in the jaw and improve the durability of dental implants by delivering important proteins in a noninvasive manner. Working with scientists from the UCLA Department of Bioengineering, Northwestern University, and the NanoCarbon Research Institute in Japan, UCLA researchers found that these tiny diamonds—which are 4 to 5 nanometers in size, shaped like tiny soccer balls, and created as by-products of conventional mining and refining operations—may help improve bone growth and fight osteonecrosis, a disease that causes bone loss. Osteonecrosis can occur in the jaw or near joints, and when this bone loss occurs next to dental im-

plants, it can lead to the implants becoming loose or failing because there isn't enough adjoining bone to help secure the implant. During bone repair operations, proteins are administered through an invasive surgical procedure to help promote bone growth; however, the UCLA researchers found that nanodiamonds, which are invisible to the human eye, bind rapidly to both bone protein and fibroblast growth factor, allowing the proteins to be delivered more slowly and the affected area to be treated for a longer period of time. Another positive is that nanodiamond treatment can be administered noninvasively, either by injection or as an oral rinse. Dr. Dean Ho, the study's lead researcher, believes that nanodiamonds are useful for delivering a broad range of therapies and may positively impact other domains in the dental and medical fields, including oral, maxillofacial, and orthopedic surgery.

They're Using *What* to Grow New Teeth?

Stem cell research has been expanding for years, with proponents claiming that stem cells offer the possibility of a renewable source of replacement cells and tissues to treat a variety of diseases. They even have the potential to save injured teeth and grow jawbone, and possibly regenerate an entire tooth. According to a study published in the journal *Cell Regeneration*, scientists in China have grown teeth using stem cells from one of the last things you would hope to find in your mouth: urine. Using cells from human urine, the study's researchers created stem cells that could potentially form rudimentary teeth and implanted them into the kidneys of mice. After three weeks, the urine stem cells grew into toothlike structures that contained dental pulp, dentin, and enamel. While the "teeth" were similar in structure and physicality to human teeth, study researchers admitted that the teeth were softer and weaker than human teeth and that further research is necessary before urine stem cells can be used as a viable source for growing teeth. This experimental research has been met with resistance by other stem cell researchers worldwide, who caution that urine does not contain a significant amount of cells and that there is a higher risk of bacterial contamination than with cells from other sources in the body.



Getting “Real” About Tobacco

According to the Oral Cancer Foundation (OCF), approximately 42,000 Americans will be diagnosed with oral cancer in 2014, resulting in more than 8,000 deaths. That’s more than one person every hour, every day. One of the leading causes of oral cancer is tobacco, which is responsible for 75 percent of oral cancers, according to the OCF. For years, tobacco has also been linked to many other forms of cancer, including cancer of the lungs, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, kidney, bladder, uterus, cervix, colon/rectum, and ovaries, as well as acute myeloid leukemia, according to the American Cancer Society. Additionally, tobacco products—which include cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco—have been linked to a multitude of other health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and pulmonary disease, just to name a few. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Surgeon General’s *Report on Smoking and Health*, more than 20 million Americans have died because of cigarette smoking in the past 50 years; 2.5 million of those were nonsmokers who died because they breathed secondhand smoke. The report states that 5.6 million of today’s children will ultimately die from smoking if current smoking rates are not reduced, which is why it’s so important that kids be made aware of the adverse effects of tobacco on their health, and a new campaign aimed at teens is helping to drive this message home.

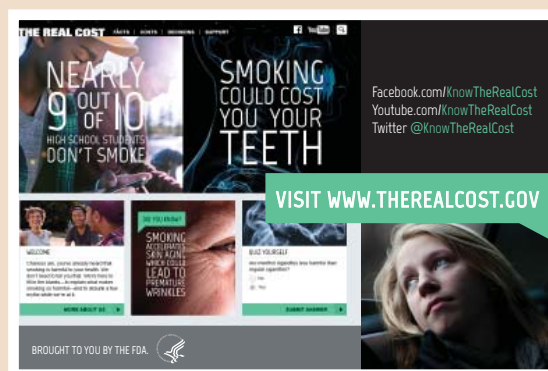
Every day in the United States, more than 3,200 youth under age 18 smoke their first cigarette, and more than 700 youth under age 18 become daily smokers, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These statistics highlight a critical need for stronger, targeted youth tobacco prevention efforts. With this in mind, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has launched a national public education campaign targeting 12- to 17-year-olds with “real cost” messages about the consequences of tobacco use, including cosmetic, oral, and overall health. Educating teens about the danger of tobacco use in a way that is personally relevant to them can be challenging, according to the FDA, because many teens don’t understand the full ramifications of tobacco use, don’t believe they will get addicted, and don’t think that the long-term health consequences of smoking apply to them.

The Real Cost campaign, which includes social media and online platforms, as well as traditional TV, radio, and print advertising, is targeting an estimated 10 million at-risk teens about the harmful effects of tobacco. Early intervention is critical because almost nine out of every 10 regular adult smokers pick up their first cigarette by age 17, says FDA Commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg, MD.

While the health risks associated with tobacco use are well reported, the FDA believes that teens may respond to what it is calling the other “costs” of tobacco use, such as cosmetic health effects like tooth loss and skin damage. The FDA is hoping that highlighting consequences that teens are concerned about, such as physical appearance, will be an effective approach to reducing youth tobacco use.

Some of the campaign’s messaging includes:

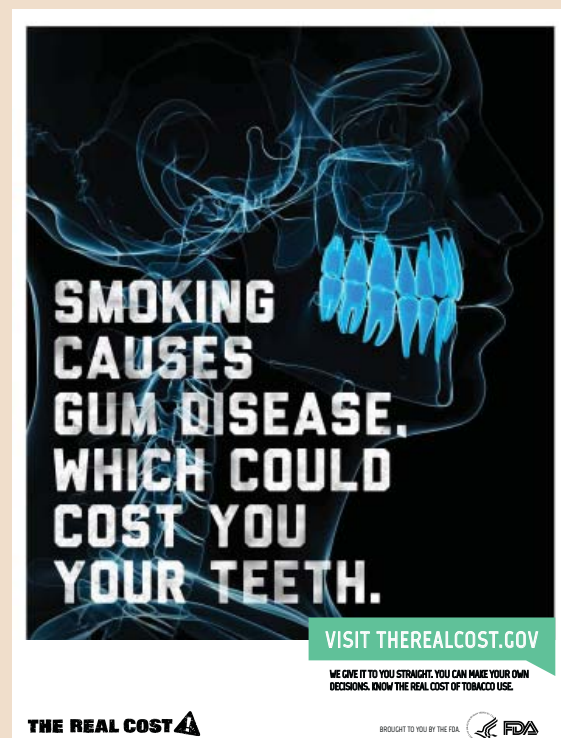
- See what your smile could look like if you smoke
- Smoking cigarettes can cause yellow teeth, bad breath, and gum disease
- Don’t smile, smoking may stain your teeth
- Smoking causes gum disease, which could cost you your teeth



The FDA views its first youth tobacco prevention campaign as a major investment in the power of prevention, with the hope that teens will be dissuaded from using tobacco. For more information on the Real Cost campaign, visit www.therealcost.gov.

There are two ways to decrease your risk of the many health problems related to tobacco: Don’t start smoking in the first place, or quit. If you do smoke, be aware of the addictive nature of nicotine, which is found in all tobacco products and which makes quitting difficult, but not impossible. Talk to your dentist or physician to see if there are medications available that would help you to stop using tobacco.

Visit www.smokefree.gov for more resources and tips on how to kick the habit for good, because when it comes to your overall health, which includes your oral health, tobacco use is one habit you don’t want to pick up.



150

IT'S AN IMPORTANT NUMBER
TO THE **MDS** THIS YEAR.

BUT TO OUR MORE THAN 4,000 MEMBERS,
THE PATIENTS CARED FOR EVERY DAY
WILL NEVER BE JUST NUMBERS TO US.



www.massdental.org