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Health Topic: Nutrition and Dental Health



Edward Clemons, DDS, General Dentistry with a personal touch

practice in Durham, NC says, “Dental Health and Nutrition go hand in hand like tires on a car. You can put gas and oil in your car, but if it has old, worn out tires, which are out of alignment, the ride will be bumpy.” So if you want a smooth ride, our gas and oil are proper nutrients:

***Calcium-**, which usually comes by drinking fat-free, 1% or low-fat dairy products.

***Fiber:** which we get from whole grains, oatmeal, beans, vegetables and fruits. These fiber rich foods keep our bodies energized for a long time.

***Protein:** usually found in meats, help your body build strong muscles.

***Water:** the body requires hydration and nothing replaces this essential element.

***Fat-** it provides energy for the body and helps absorb certain vitamins. There are 4 types of fats: **Saturated fat:** called “bad fat”, that increase the cholesterol levels. **Trans fat:** called “bad fat” also, usually found in margarine, cookies, cakes and French fries, etc., increase cholesterol levels. **Monounsaturated fat:** “better fat”, usually found in nuts, canola oil, olive oil etc. **Polyunsaturated fats:** “better fat”, as found in fish, like salmon and trout, and vegetable oil.

As for **Dental Health**, the teeth need to be free from disease i.e., cavities, periodontal disease and strong enough to chew up the food for proper digestion. Certain foods like sugar and cakes promote the breakdown of the enamel, making our teeth weak and lead to cavities. More importantly, periodontal disease has been linked to cardiovascular disease, so keeping the mouth clean and healthy by brushing, flossing and getting 2 checkups per year, will help maintain good oral hygiene.



Nutrition



Veronica Ray, MD, Internal Medicine at Lincoln Community Health

Center states, “Eating the right foods in the right amount at the right times of the day are keys to a healthy eating plan.”

*Don't skip meals, and don't eat too much.

*Try to eat 3-4 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables daily.

*Enjoy 2-3 servings of lean meats such as chicken, or turkey without the skin, fish, lean ground beef, ground turkey, and lean cuts of pork, and low fat cheese. Enjoy 2-3 servings of low fat dairy products.

*Include 6 servings of starches, preferably choosing "100% whole grain," products such as brown or wild rice and whole wheat pasta.

*Limit snack foods, which generally contain too much salt, white flour, and sugar. These are a special treat, so eat only small amounts and infrequently.

*Eating slowly helps to avoid overeating, allowing your body to feel satisfied. Wait 10 minutes before going back for seconds to see if you're really hungry.

*Buy locally grown produce from farmer's markets. Local food is fresher and tastes better than food shipped from long distances.

*Grow your own vegetable or herb garden.

*Explore the many types of organic fruits and vegetables

Remember:



Read the food Nutrition Labels, so you can learn to choose healthier foods and watch calories, total fats, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars and proteins.

By eating foods that have high nutritional values, and drinking a lot of water, our body with some exercise, will feel and work better, and give us that smooth ride.

Remember your ABC's:

Always the right nutrition, **B**rush teeth after meals, and get **C**heckups every 6 months

Health Tip is a message from Community Health Coalition, Inc. and is written in partnership with Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity and Duke Regional Hospital.

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