

Nutrition by mouth!

Dr Bill Kellner-Read BDS (Dental Surgeon)



The importance of nutrition in dentistry has long been underated. Yet in essence as we look into the mouth we see the gateway to the rest of the body. Too often we are lead to believe that all we need do is brush our teeth, use a mouthwash, floss occasionally and we will be okay. Yet in my practice I see gum disease, periodontal disease, missing and loose teeth in people who say that they brush twice a day at least. So if they are doing their job what is happening? Why do we see such poor mouths and how does this impact on the rest of the body?

Dentistry's answer has been poor brushing technique, smoking and lack of fluoride. Is this all that there is to it or is there more? We only need to look at the epic work of Dr Weston Price DDS to see that the answer lies not just in oral hygiene but also in poor nutrition. He made this statement back in the 1930's:

We have known for 40 years and more that the cause of physical degeneration is largely nutritional. May God help us if it takes another 40 years for our health professionals, the Food and Drug Administration, and our political and administrative officeholders to accept these facts.

Dr Price travelled the world looking at primitive tribes eating a primitive diet. He found no disease, no crime, no dental crowding and no tooth decay. However those tribal people who adopted the western diet suffered the same medical problems and dental decay as western man. The answer was nutritional. So are we getting enough good nutrition to keep us healthy?

A report to the US Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs in February 1977 suggests that we are not:

Presently, we are a nation of sugarholics eating hollow, overcooked, government-inspected canned and packaged food with 20-80% of the nutrition destroyed in the processing. Breakfast cereals are a good example. Tests show that the paper boxes often contain more nutrition than all the cereal contents. The nutrients in the wood pulp are still present while overly processed cereals are quite devoid of nutritional value.

The need for supplementation rather than just a good diet becomes apparent.

Heart disease and stroke have been linked to gum disease. People with diabetes are more at risk if they have gum disease. Research by Dr Moise Desvarieux from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, found that the prevalence of carotid artery plaque

(which can lead to stroke) was significantly associated with tooth loss levels. Questions arise from this, is the cause poor oral hygiene, poor nutrition or both?

If we look at Scurvy perhaps we see an answer. Jaques Cartier described the health of the crew marooned in the St Lawrence River in 1535:

Their mouths became stinking, their gums so rotten, that all their flesh did fall off, even the roots of the teeth did almost all fall out.

Cartier was witnessing the breakdown of the elastin and collagen fibres that make up the gingival and arterial tissues of the mouth. Except for those whose sickly conditions were too far advanced, Cartier saw a rapid reversal of this disease with the administration of vitamin C.

Scurvy is caused by a deficiency in vitamin C. Dr Linus Pauling Nobel prize winner states that most cardiovascular disease is caused by a lack of vitamin C in the diet. So is there a link between heart disease and gum disease? Is it purely a dirty mouth or is it also nutritional?

A lack of coenzyme Q10 and selenium is seen in people with both heart disease and gum disease. Mineral deficient diets have been linked to sore mouth, angular cheilitis(soreness at the corners of the mouth) mouth ulcers and a host of other conditions. Periodontal disease has been linked to poor oxygenation of the tissues with vascular insufficiency. Nitric Oxide derived from L-Arginine has been shown to increase oxygenation due to its ability to dilate blood vessels. This increases health of the tissues and also exposes anaerobic bacteria prevalent in gum disease to oxygen.

The ARK products bring to the market place nutrition that is bioavailable, due to the revolutionary concept of micro-nutrition, nutrition is delivered at a cellular level. Not only does this mean that cellular nutrition is achieved but also that product uptake is maximised, reducing waste.

It can be seen that good general and oral health is dependent on good nutrition. With empty, ageing, mineral deficient foods destroyed by over farming, pesticides, air exposure and extended shelf lives the need for supplementation becomes synonymous with good health.

Certainly for those who already have a health challenge supplementation is paramount.

For those with dental problems I recommend supplementation as part of the procedure for restoring health to the dental tissues. Does this replace the need for a good brush and floss using a non-toxic toothpaste and mouthwash? No, it is part of the overall approach for good health and good dental health.