



CANADA'S ORAL HEALTH

Report Card



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) issued its official Gingivitis Call-to-Action during Listerine Gingivitis Week in June, 2006. This unprecedented research-based statement cemented the CDHA's official recommended oral hygiene routine for the reduction of gingivitis – inflammation of the gums caused by dental plaque build-up in the mouth:

1. **Brushing:** Removes surface dental plaque.
2. **Flossing:** Reaches between teeth to remove dental plaque.
3. **Rinsing with an essential oil antiseptic mouthrinse:** Reduces and prevents dental plaque and gingivitis more than brushing and flossing can alone.
4. **Regular dental hygiene visits**

As motivation for improving oral hygiene, the Call-to-Action outlined links between oral disease such as periodontitis and overall health; including poor blood sugar control in diabetics, a variety of heart diseases and stroke, pre-term low birth weight babies, and lung disease.

How does Canadian knowledge and action measure up, one year after the CDHA's compelling Call-to-Action? This first-ever Canadian Oral Health Report Cardⁱ reveals a startling state of the nation:

Canada's Oral Health Report Card

- F** Gingivitis Self-Awareness
- D+** Oral-Overall Health Links Awareness
- F** Oral Hygiene Routines – Knowledge & Action
- C** Flossing
- C-** Tooth Brushing
- F** Rinsing

Subject: **Gingivitis Self-Awareness**

State of the Nation: 64% of Canadians believe there is less than a 1 in 10 chance they have gingivitis.

The Facts: It is estimated that at least half of Canadians have gingivitisⁱⁱ. Yet only 11% of Canadians are aware of this startling statistic.

Grade: **F**

Subject: **Oral-Overall Health Links Awareness**

State of the Nation: 90% of Canadians are aware oral health is linked to overall health.

- Alberta and Atlantic provinces earn highest marks: 97% awareness
 - Only 79% of Quebecers are aware, leaving them at the bottom of the nation's classroom
- BUT** when it comes to identifying the conditions linked to oral health, Canadians earn a failing grade.
- 41% were unable to make the connection to specific health conditions.
 - Most aware of oral health links to heart disease and diabetes, least aware of links to pre-term low birth weight babies.

Gingivitis

IS BOTH PREVENTABLE AND REVERSIBLE.

Brush, floss and rinse your way to optimal health.

- Awareness levels:
 - Heart disease: 34% (39% of females vs. 29% of males)
 - Diabetes: 29% (low: Quebec – 22 % / high: Ontario – 34%)
 - Respiratory diseases: 26% (low: ages 55+ – 23% / high: ages 18-24 – 33%)
 - Pre-term low birth weight babies: 13% (low: Quebec – 7% / high: Alberta – 18%)

The Facts: Research shows oral health and oral disease such as periodontitis are linked to overall health. Specific conditions include diabetes, heart diseases and stroke, pre-term low birth weight babies, and lung disease.^{iii,iv}

Average Grade: D+

Subject: Oral Hygiene Routines – Knowledge & Action

State of the Nation: 89% of Canadians rate their current oral hygiene routines 'good' or better

- Excellent: 26%, Very Good: 38%, Good: 25%

40% are aware the CDHA's recommended gold standard oral hygiene routine is brushing, flossing and rinsing with an essential oil antiseptic mouthrinse.

- 39% incorrectly believe the gold standard routine to be brushing and flossing alone.

Yet, less than one quarter of Canadians (21%) perform this gold standard oral hygiene routine.

- Rankings:
 1. British Columbia – 28%
 2. Atlantic Canada – 26%
 3. Quebec & Ontario (tie) – 20%
 4. Alberta – 19%
 5. Manitoba/Saskatchewan – 16%

The Facts: More than three quarters of Canadians are not following the CDHA's official recommended routine of brushing, flossing, and rinsing with an essential oil antiseptic mouthrinse. This routine has been clinically shown to reduce and prevent plaque and gingivitis more than brushing and flossing can alone.^v

Grade: F

Subject: Flossing

State of the Nation: Two thirds of Canadians are aware it is acceptable and effective to use tools such as floss holders, automatic flossers, interdental brushes, picks, and irrigators, to help make flossing easier.

The Fact: Research shows that all the above tools help floss reach the areas between the teeth to remove dental plaque.^{vi}

Grade: C

Subject: Tooth Brushing

State of the Nation: Slightly more than half of Canadians are aware a power toothbrush is better at removing dental plaque and reducing gingivitis than a manual toothbrush.

High: Alberta – 64%

Low: Quebec – 43%

The Fact: A power toothbrush with rotation-oscillation action is better at removing dental plaque and reducing gingivitis than manual toothbrushes.^{vii}

Grade: C-

Subject: Rinsing

State of the Nation: Canadians are divided, with less than one-half aware that rinsing with an essential oil antiseptic mouthrinse like Listerine reduces and prevents plaque and gingivitis more than brushing and flossing alone.

- Males more aware than females (52% vs. 46%)

The Fact: Canadians may think they are making the oral health grade, yet only one fifth (21%) are actually doing the optimal oral hygiene routine of brushing, flossing and rinsing with an essential oil antiseptic mouthrinse. It's no wonder that 50% of Canadians have gingivitis.

Grade: F

i 2007 Oral Health Report Card, Decima Research (Mar. 2007)

ii Brown LJ, Brunelle JA, Kingman A. Periodontal status in the United States, 1998-1991: prevalence, extent and demographic variation. J Dent Res. 1996;75(Spec Iss): 672-83.

iii Lux, J. Review of the Oral Disease-Systemic Link. Part II: Preterm Low Birth Weight Babies, Respiratory Disease, Canadian Journal of Dental Hygiene. 2007 Jan-Feb;41(1):8-21.

iv Lux, J. Review of the Oral Disease-Systemic Link. Part I: Heart Disease, Diabetes, Canadian Journal of Dental Hygiene. 2006 Nov-Dec;40(6):288-342.

v Asadoorian, J. Oral Rinsing: CDHA Position Paper on Commercially Available Over-the-Counter Oral Rinsing Products. Canadian Journal of Dental Hygiene. 2006 July-Aug;40(4):168-83.

vi Asadoorian, J. Flossing: CDHA Position Paper. Canadian Journal of Dental Hygiene. 2006 May-Jun;40(3):112-25.

vii Asadoorian, J. CDHA Position Paper on Tooth Brushing. Canadian Journal of Dental Hygiene. 2006 Sept-Oct;40(5):232-48.



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96 CentrepoinTE Drive, Ottawa ON K2G 6B1
Telephone: 613 224-5515 Toll Free: 1 800 267-5235
Fax: 613 224-7283 E-mail: info@cdha.ca Website: www.cdha.ca