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ADOPT HEALTHY TOOTH HABITS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE MONTH

MORGANTOWN, WV – (OCTOBER 19, 2017)

The statistics are frightening. Nearly 19 percent of children ages 5 to 19 years old have untreated dental cavities. And that number nearly doubles—to 31.6 percent—for adults ages 20 to 44.

October is National Dental Hygiene Month, and if it’s been more than six months since you’ve visited the dentist’s office, it’s time to make an appointment. You should receive a professional dental cleaning by a dental hygienist as well as X-rays and an exam by a dentist who can check for cavities and other dental problems.

Bad oral health has been linked systemically to chronic illnesses including diabetes and heart disease. It is also known to be caused by risk behaviors like using tobacco and eating and drinking foods and beverages high in sugar.

Cavities, or tooth decay, are one of the most common chronic infections in the United States. By age 34, more than 80 percent of people have had at least one cavity. More than 40 percent of adults have felt pain in their mouth in the last year. On average, the nation spends more than $113 billion a year on costs related to dental care. More than $6 billion of productivity is lost each year because people miss work to get dental care.

Starting healthy tooth habits early is important, as is maintaining those practices throughout your life. In addition to visiting the dentist every six months, other good routines to follow include brushing your teeth twice a day, flossing at night and using mouthwash daily.

Children younger than 6 years old should not use mouthwash unless directed by a dentist, because they may swallow it inadvertently. Children should begin visiting the dentist at the age of 1, according to the American Dental Association (ADA). Everyone is encouraged to use a toothpaste that contains fluoride. If children are younger than 6, watch them as they brush their teeth, making sure they use a small amount. Children who cannot spit should use a tiny amount of toothpaste the size of a grain of rice—just a smear. As they begin spitting out, a pea-sized amount of toothpaste may be used.

Another key to good dental health is diet. Avoid sugary, sweetened beverages and consider limiting sweet treats and instead substituting items such as fruits and vegetables. Taking a bottle or sippy cup that contains anything except water into the crib or bed is an easy way to bring on tooth decay and should be avoided.
MCHD Dentistry at the Monongalia County Health Department is a full-service dental office that can provide most of your family’s dental needs. MCHD Dentistry accepts insurance and offers new patient specials for those without dental insurance: $150 for adults, $125 for children ages 6 to 17 and $75 for children ages 5 and under. Call 304-598-5108. You can also find us at www.mchddentistry.com.

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