

On Science & Medicine

You and Your Dental Health Improving your bite

By Dr. Abdul Salaam

CHICAGO — Has your dentist ever said to you, "You may need your bite corrected?" With the advanced understanding that is taking place today in dental knowledge, we have learned that teeth that do not "fit" right may cause problems in the supporting structures of the teeth, the jaw bones and or muscles supporting the jaws, head and neck. Technically it is spoken of as traumatic occlusion and the procedure of correction is frequently referred to as occlusal equilibration.

TEETH DON'T JUST sit in our jaws like pegs in a row of holes. The structure that holds them in place and enable them to chew for a lifetime without wobbling or falling out is delicate and complex. It consists of five different kinds of tissue, all neatly adjusted to each other and to their function.

Your teeth and jaws are a very delicately adjusted machine. Your jaw muscles are among the most powerful muscles in the body. These muscles bring your teeth together with tremendous force thousands of times a day and scientists have established as much as 300 pounds of pressure can be generated between the teeth. That may mean a total of 25 tons in one day. That makes it rather obvious that if the machine is to stay in order they've got to come together right.

Of course the procedure chosen by the dentist to correct the bite problem depends on the total factors involved. For example: Suppose a tooth is missing or wanders out of place. The opposite tooth doesn't get any pressure when you chew. That's just as bad as pressure in the wrong direction. All teeth need exercise. That's why dogs are frequently fed bones.

Every organ needs to function in order to keep healthy. The problem of a missing tooth then is a rather simple correction, if indicated the dentist will suggest the tooth be replaced (this excludes third molars, wisdom teeth which are never replaced).

Some cases of traumatic occlusion however can be quite severe and frequently occur in mouths of patients with all of their teeth. We have seen many cases where all of the teeth are there but they do not come together properly. They don't get the proper exercise either and frequently come together in such a way that instead of an up and down thrust, some of the teeth get pushed sideways with terrific leverage whenever you chew or grit your teeth.

That is just as bad as no exercise.

Here the method of correction is a little more complex. It consists of restoring the relationship of the teeth to each other so that they will mesh properly. This can be done sometimes by reshaping, moving or occasionally rebuilding a few or many teeth.

Babies' skin needs care

NEW YORK — In an article on "Skin Care For Babies" in a recent issue of *Bedside Nurse*, a publication for practical nurses, it is noted that bath time is a time for relaxation for both mother and baby. The infant "will soon begin to associate bath with pleasure, and to regard the person who bathes him with love and trust. Water-play is also considered by the experts to be very beneficial to an infant's development."

ALTHOUGH NO one can feel relaxed at all times, the author states, "it is a known fact that a tense, irritable mother transmits her feelings to her

baby who may become tearful and anxious in response."

Because newborn babies are especially prone to staphylococcal skin infections, proper care of baby's skin is stressed. Gentle thorough regular bathing of the infant with a mild, antibacterial skin cleanser, plus its use for handwashing as well by persons who handle him, is reported to help control the incidence of infection.

Babies become less thin-skinned with age, the article concludes, yet continuation of good skin care helps to protect the growing child from the ever-present problems of skin infections.

Cancer rise among men, especially Black

WASHINGTON — According to recent findings, there has been a rise in the number of cases of cancer among men, especially Black men.

THE FINDINGS, made known in a report by the National Cancer Institute, are based on a 1969 study of some 20 million people living in the state of Iowa and eight metropolitan areas.

The study showed that the rate of cancer among men increased from 280 per 100,000 in 1947 to 304 in 1969. During

the same time it decreased from 294 to 257 per 100,000 among women.

The report said that among the men, Blacks suffered more from cancer of the prostate and esophagus than whites.

The report also said that men are suffering more from cases of cancer of the lungs and colon than are women.

The decrease of cancer among women is attributed to a drop of cancer of the uterine cervix, stomach and rectum.

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