

## **Healthy Mouth Baseline**

A healthy mouth is freedom from oral pain, biofilm, sensitivity to hot and cold, calculus (tartar), oral cancer, bad breath, decay and gum disease. If any of these are present at any given time then one's mouth is unhealthy, which will affect the overall health.

**Oral pain** can be caused from many different factors. These factors include but are not limited to:

- Dental Abscess- A pus-filled structure caused by an infection. Pain with chewing, severe toothache, mild toothache
  - Possible complications due to untreated infections include:
    - “Loss of the tooth
    - Mediastinitis
    - Sepsis
    - Spread of infection to soft tissue (facial cellulitis, Ludwig’s angina)
    - Spread of infection to the jaw bone (osteomyelitis of the jaw)
    - Spread of infection to other areas of the body resulting in brain abscess, endocarditis, pneumonia, or other complications” (Rosenberg, 2010a)
- Carious Lesions, also known as decay, which is an infection
- Canker Sores/Cold Sores-Ulcers of the mouth, lips, and/or face. Oral pain when eating, drinking or speaking.
- Trauma (2011a)

**Biofilm**, also known as plaque is an invisible layer of bacteria and their waste products that develops on the teeth.

### **Sensitivity when drinking or eating hot or cold items**

**Calculus (tartar)**, also known as calculus is the hard mineralized substance that gets deposited on teeth and cannot be removed by a toothbrush.

### **Oral cancer**

Oral cancer is abnormal (malignant) growth of body cells in any part of the oral cavity. (MedicineNet.com 2015)

**Bad breath**, also known as halitosis, can be caused by but are not limited to:

- Not brushing and flossing at least twice a day
- Dry mouth-This can be caused by certain medications. Saliva helps to cleanse the teeth and remove bacteria. When saliva is decreased an odor can cause bad breath.

- Tobacco Products
- Certain foods such as garlic or onions. Once the food is absorbed into the bloodstream, it is transferred to the lungs, where it is expelled.
- Periodontal disease
- Certain medical disorders such as chronic sinusitis, postnasal drip, diabetes, chronic bronchitis, respiratory tract infections, gastrointestinal disturbances, liver or kidney ailment. (2011b)
- Dental abscess
- Carious lesions (cavities)

### **Decay (cavities)**

“Tooth decay is damage that occurs when germs (bacteria) in your mouth make acids that eat away at a tooth. It can lead to a hole in the tooth called a cavity.”

### **Gum Disease**

- Gingivitis
  - Gingivitis is an infection of the gums. It is the first stage of gum disease. It is characterized by red, swollen, bleeding gums. It is caused by leaving biofilm (plaque) on the teeth over an extended period of time. It is a completely reversible infection. To reverse the infections, one needs to keep the teeth and gums clean by brushing and flossing at least twice a day. (Rosenberg, 2010b)
- Periodontitis
  - Periodontitis is an infection of the tissues around the teeth: the gums and bone. When gingivitis is not treated, the infection moves from the gums to the bone causing a pocket around the teeth. The bone and the gums slowly move away from the teeth and can cause tooth loss if left untreated. (Rosenberg, 2010c)

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