

New research uncovers concerning oral health trends amongst both adults and children

- **Nearly a third of children have had between one and five fillings according to parents asked**
- **Only 73% of adults brush twice a day or more, and 33% NEVER floss**
- **A quarter of adults (24%) admit they are “addicted” to sugar**
- **Only 20% of adults think that poor oral health can be linked to heart disease**

The Simplyhealth Consumer Oral Health Survey* report, highlights a number of jaw-dropping statistics regarding the nation’s oral health.

Despite the best efforts of dentists, only 73% of people brush their teeth twice a day or more as recommended and a third of respondents (33%) say they never floss! Women brush up when it comes to oral health, with 77% brushing at least twice a day compared with only 69% of men.

In addition, the research reveals that almost one in ten adults (8%) are avoiding the dental chair and say they only visit the dentist when they’re in pain - perhaps not helped by the fact that over a third (36%) say they are afraid of the dentist.

Furthermore, in spite of a greater awareness of the link between oral health and general health, with 75% of people agreeing that poor oral health can have a significant impact on general health, only 20% think oral health can be linked to heart disease and a mere 13% think it can be linked to diabetes.

Commenting on the figures, dentist and Simplyhealth spokesperson, Dr Catherine Rutland said: “With busy lifestyles, it’s tempting to skip brushing or flossing, or delay visits to the dentist. A good oral health routine is an essential everyday activity that helps to protect against tooth decay and gum disease.

“Moreover, studies are increasingly finding links between oral health and common conditions including heart disease, dementia and diabetes, so further education for dental patients in this area is certainly needed. It’s important for everyone to start thinking about how their oral health might impact on their general wellbeing. This is especially significant if you’ve been diagnosed with a serious health condition, or if you’re at high risk of developing one.

“Dental practice teams can tailor dental care needs in relation to a certain conditions. For example, diabetics are at a higher risk of developing oral health issues such as dry mouth, gum disease and mouth infections, but these can be managed with expert help from your dental practice team.”

The research also uncovered some shocking childhood insights**. Only two thirds (63%) of parents surveyed visit the dentist every six months with their child, which is the check-up period recommended by experts. Just under a quarter (23%) visit the dentist once a year and, even more worryingly, 5% never visit!

The survey also explored the problems parents face when trying to get their children to brush their teeth regularly and correctly, with 64% of respondents saying getting their child to brush their teeth for two minutes, twice a day was their biggest challenge. Ensuring children have tooth-friendly drinks is a struggle for 41% of parents and 37% said finding tooth-friendly snacks for their children can be a problem.

Dr Catherine Rutland, comments: “While children’s teeth are developing, it’s important to visit the dentist regularly – ideally every six months. It’s best to take

your child for their first dental appointment when their milk teeth start to appear, which is usually around six months of age. Even if your young child doesn't let the dentist do a thorough check-up, just being in the dental environment is beneficial by helping them to become familiar with the team, sights, sounds and smells of a dental practice. Regular dental check-ups from an early age encourages children to understand the importance of good oral health habits for life, as well as helping potential dental problems to be spotted early.”

To read the full report and to find out more visit:

<https://www.simplyhealth.co.uk/COHS>

ENDS

Source

*Simplyhealth Consumer Oral Health Survey 2019. Online survey of 5083 adults conducted by Dynata (formally Research Now SSI) on behalf of Simplyhealth, undertaken 24 January – 5 February 2019. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (18+).

** Children's section of the survey: Simplyhealth Consumer Oral Health Survey 2019. Online survey of 1014 adult parents conducted by Dynata (formally Research Now SSI) on behalf of Simplyhealth, undertaken 24 January – 31 January 2019. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (18+).

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About Simplyhealth Professionals:

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Simplyhealth Professionals also provide a wide range of professional services for its member dentists and their practice teams, including the Denplan Quality Programme and

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About Simplyhealth

Since 1872 we've been helping people get healthcare through our health plans, charity partnerships and by being a voice in healthcare.

Today we're delighted to be the UK's leading provider of health plans, dental plans and pet health plans, which help individuals, families, employees and pets to get support with their health when they need it.

We don't have shareholders which means we are totally focused on making sure no one goes without the healthcare support they need, and why we are passionate about being a voice in healthcare and partnering with charities to reduce health inequality.

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