Avoiding Dental Problems and Maintaining Oral Health Care

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Dental Problems With Depression

Living with depression, as well as the medications used to manage the condition can predispose most people to some serious problems when it comes to the health of their smile. A proactive approach is needed to help prevent, reverse and avoid complications that dentists often find in people who are depressed. Let's dive into dental problems with depression.

Medication Effects

Although some medications can cause tongue discoloration, or even contain sugar (increasing the amount of tooth decay you develop), they are mostly known for causing xerostomia, also known as dry mouth. Xerostomia prevents your smile from being well-lubricated with saliva, which drastically increases the likelihood of developing cavities. When possible, choose sugar-free medications.

Lack of Motivation, Poor Diet Choices

Feeling unmotivated about caring for your teeth can allow oral hygiene habits to go by the wayside, allowing teeth to demineralize and decay. Avoiding dentist visits will cause small problems to become bigger ones. People with depression have been found to have much higher rates of decay as well as complete loss of teeth. One of the other reasons for this is because diet habits may be poor as well. Pay attention to what you eat and drink and be sure to drink plenty of water and eat fresh, crunchy produce as often as possible.

Preventive Steps to Reduce Dental Complications:

Sealants - Placing protective sealants across the chewing surfaces will prevent cavities from forming in areas that are at an increased risk. They’re very easy to apply and can be placed by your dentist or hygienist.

Fluoride - Topical fluoride during your dental visits with strengthen enamel that has been weakened due to dry mouth, poor oral hygiene, or nutritional risks. If necessary, your dentist may also prescribe a home fluoride to use daily if you have multiple areas of demineralization or existing decay.

Xylitol - Chewing gum or using a spray that contains xylitol will prevent plaque from building up on the surface of your teeth.

A dedicated oral hygiene routine - This should include regular check-ups and cleanings with your dentist. Proper brushing and flossing are important to eliminate gingivitis and prevent gum disease. Floss should extend under the gums around each tooth, regardless of whether or not your gums bleed (bleeding is simply a sign that you have a gum infection.) Gently brush your gum lines to remove excess plaque and stimulate the tissue. It’s important to be proactive about your oral health because some studies have suggested people that battle depression do not respond as well to gum therapies.

Make it easier to take care of your or your loved one’s teeth. Investing in electronic toothbrushes and home oral hygiene aids makes oral care habits simpler and more effective. Don’t put your dental visits off. Always schedule your next preventive care visit while you’re still at the dentist. In the worst-case scenario, the appointment can be rescheduled if a conflict comes up. Cleanings every 6 months will minimize the impact of poor oral health and allow your dentist to diagnose needs while they are smaller and simpler to treat.