

NB Dentists warn that eating disorders can impair teeth for a lifetime

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Fredericton – Did you know that one of the side effects of eating disorders is the impact on one’s teeth? Dr. Kelly Manning, President of the NB Dental Society, highlights this serious health issue during Oral Health Month and warns, “Along with the many general health effects that occur with an eating disorder, an individual’s teeth can be greatly impacted”. Erosion of the tooth enamel, vitamin deficiency and even the frequent consumption of high sugar foods (such as elevated consumption of acidic carbonated drinks to boost energy or decrease hunger) can lead to long-term damage in the mouth if not addressed by a professional.

Dentists and parents alike need to take note of this disorder and speak with patients who might be struggling with the illness. “Along with physical and mental health support, a visit to the dentist is important to design strategies to minimize the impact on your teeth”, Dr. Manning comments. “Reducing the acidic environment in the mouth is extremely important. Rinsing with water regularly and ensuring to brush and floss daily are important.” Your dentist can provide other tools as well, including fluoride gel to help repair damage done to tooth enamel.

Parents who have concerns about their children’s eating habits should discuss those concerns with a health professional (such as a dentist).

April is Oral Health Month and the New Brunswick Dental Society is participating with a public education campaign highlighting the message “Building Better Teeth.”

The New Brunswick Dental Society exists to promote professional growth, high ethical standards and quality care giving through communication, education and the regulation of dentistry in New Brunswick.

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You can survive an eating disorder with healthy teeth:

1. Compulsive eating involving frequent consumption of high sugar foods can lead to tooth decay. Brush 2 minutes at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.
2. Vomiting in Bulimia can lead to erosion of enamel. Rinse with baking soda and water after vomiting; wait half an hour before brushing. Use a high-dose fluoride toothpaste.
3. Restrictive eating of Anorexia Nervosa can lead to vitamin deficiency. Ensure enough Vitamin C for healthy gums; Vitamin D and calcium for healthy teeth and bones. Fluoride tablets can be used for children under 16. Use supplements if necessary, until your food provides the levels needed for good health. Brush and floss daily.

4. Home Fluoride trays may be fabricated by your dentist. Use high dose fluoride gel in trays weekly or daily as prescribed by your dentist to strengthen your teeth and repair damage done by acid and bacteria.
5. Mineral water is a great fluoridated beverage. Skip the lemon, and diet pop- they are acidic, and demineralize teeth. A litre of mineral water per day with 0.2 to 0.5 ppm fluoride ion can help keep your teeth healthy.

Your dentist and their team can help you keep your teeth, for life.