

## ORAL HYGIENE

### TEETH DESERVE SAME CARE AS RIFLES.

(By Corporal LeRoy Sellers.)

The science of medicine has for its purpose three prime objects as justification for its existence: the cure of disease, the relieving of suffering, and last and most important, the prevention of disease.

The science of dentistry, an offspring of medicine now recognized as separate form, has also the above mentioned objects. This article will deal only with the last object inasmuch as prevention of disease is of greatest importance.

A wise man said that "A stitch in time saves nine."

As we grow older and as the years pass we are more and more impressed with the truthfulness of that saying. Carefully planned oral hygiene is the one stitch which will ultimately save hours of pain, embarrassment, expense, and more or less physical disqualification.

Many of the diseases of the mouth are insidious and stealthy in their action. Because of these characteristics there lies an added danger for the victim will delay seeing a dental surgeon until he is driven to it by excruciating pain. Then he will find that if he is not too late, he is at least in for a long term of treatment.

We will now consider the cause of nearly all dental troubles.

Food after it is eaten soon ceases to be food, if it is not subjected to the action of the digestive juices. The food of the present generation is dissimilar to that which nourished prehistoric man. The teeth of the stone-age man were designed for hard, cold, uncooked food. In mastication the hardness of that which he ate kept the surface of his teeth swept clean of food particles or any salts which might be deposited thereon by the saliva.

Conditions of living have now changed. We eat extremely hot or cold as well as soft foods. Results are that we defeat nature and our teeth suffer. Salvary deposits are the slipping stones for dental caries, gum infections and sensitive dentine.

These deposits often times take the color of the tooth and are hard to detect, but if the teeth are painted with iodine, the natural enamel takes no stain while the foreign matter adhering thereto takes the color of the iodine.

The prevention by the patient himself, of the formation of the deposits cannot be complete, so a dentist should be visited at least every six months.

Dental caries are of three general classifications, based upon the extent of the destruction of the tooth. First there is the carie which has penetrated the enamel and gives little or no warning of its presence. Inspection or the passing of dental floss are the two most available methods of detection. Such a carie is easily filled and comparatively painless.

Class two consists of caries which have destroyed the enamel and thus penetrated the softer tissues called the dentine. Such a diseased tooth is usually found by a sharp pain when eating or drinking very cold or hot food. No time should be lost in having it taken care of.

The third class is composed of caries which have penetrated the tooth chamber. The victim of such a carie always knows that something is the matter. The nerve is exposed with the blood vessels which nourish the tooth. The tooth becomes troublesome and if not promptly taken care of is soon rendered useless and impossible to save. Violent aches, abscesses and even necrotic of the jaw may result. The remedy here is either extraction or if well done, root canals can be filled and the crown restored.

Many times men procrastinate having their teeth cared for and endure the pain of several days' duration because of the fear of the dentist and his instruments, but if they could be brought to see the extreme uncleanness of such procedure he would make all haste.

Suppose you had a badly decayed tooth extracted and the dental surgeon should hand it to you and tell you to swallow it. You would be indignant. But he is only asking you to do that which you have been doing since the beginning of the carie. The tissues of the tooth are gradually wasting away and mingled with saliva are swallowed.

The liberal use of a good dentifrice with a tooth brush properly constructed will make the visits to the dental surgeon a pleasure rather than a dread.

Teeth should be brushed well before breakfast, after the noon and evening mess. The work should be done thoroughly and in line with the axis of the teeth. An adult set of teeth is divided into five zones, one for the front one for the sides or bicuspid, and one for the back or molars. The same five zones exists inside the teeth as well as four more for the grinding surface. Give every zone a good brushing and know no dental trouble.

In concluding I will quote from an editorial of the Atlanta Georgian as follows:

"Briefly in a previous editorial we have pointed out to young men in the army that much fighting is done with the teeth.

"We no longer fight our enemy, seizing him by the ear while we strangle him in the old fashion of animals and savages. But we do fight with the strength given to us by our food; chew it, prepare it for digestion, and thus with those weapons called teeth give to the body the good blood and the strength with which fighting is done.

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