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Media Release

Dental Hygiene and Your Diet

March 22, 2017 (Ottawa, ON) — During National Nutrition Month this March, dental hygienists—your partners in prevention—remind everyone of the important link between proper nutrition and oral health.

Dental hygienists see first-hand how poor diet and nutrition can affect a person's oral and overall health. Foods high in sugar, such as candy, sweet baked goods, and carbonated drinks, may contribute to tooth decay and periodontal disease, which in turn has been identified as a risk factor for more serious illnesses, such as diabetes, lung and heart diseases, and stroke. Acidic foods like tomatoes, pickles, and citrus can lead to an erosion of tooth enamel. "Our teeth and gums require essential nutrients to resist oral diseases," explains Gerry Cool, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA). "Eating well-balanced meals is an important part of maintaining both oral health and overall health."

Dental hygienists will help you to identify healthy food and beverage choices during regular appointments. As primary health care providers, they also offer the following general tips to keep your mouth and body healthy.

- Choose water over fruit juice or carbonated beverages.
- Eat foods from all four food groups. Fruits and vegetables are particularly good at stimulating saliva production, which helps to wash away food and neutralize acid in the mouth.
- Avoid sugary snacks and chewy, sticky foods that cling to the teeth.
- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste for two minutes each time.
- Clean between your teeth and use an antibacterial mouthwash daily.

"By making a commitment to healthy eating and good oral hygiene today," Cool adds, "you will enjoy a healthy smile for a lifetime."

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 28,495 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing more than 18,000 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent dental hygiene practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit: www.dentalhygienecanada.ca.

- 30 -

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