



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

Media Release

Dental Hygienists Encourage Smoke- and Vape-Free Living

January 21, 2019 (Ottawa, ON) — Canada's dental hygienists will mark National Non-Smoking Week (January 20–26) by urging all Canadians to quit smoking and vaping for better oral and overall health.

While most people know that tobacco use is a risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and lung and mouth cancers, few may be aware of the harmful effects of e-cigarettes, which are often touted as a safe alternative to traditional tobacco products and a means of controlling and reducing tobacco use. "Dental hygienists know that there are important health risks associated with vaping. They are prepared to discuss these issues with you during your regular dental hygiene appointments," explains Tracy Bowser, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA).

Dental hygienists are primary health care providers who specialize in identifying and preventing oral health problems and diseases. At every dental hygiene appointment, they examine your mouth, head, and neck, provide oral cancer screenings, and offer oral hygiene instructions and behaviour modification strategies to promote healthy living. "We know that nicotine, a substance found in many vaping products, acts as a vasoconstrictor, reducing blood flow to the gums," notes Bowser. "As a result, e-cigarette users of all ages have an increased risk of gum disease and tooth loss." For children and youth, the health consequences are even more dire because nicotine affects brain development, memory, and impulse control. Given that 23% of youth ages 15 to 19 have tried e-cigarettes, according to a 2017 Health Canada survey, dental hygienists recognize that e-cigarette use among young people must be discouraged.

By promoting a smoke- and vape-free lifestyle and working with clients to develop a good oral care plan, dental hygienists help to ensure optimal overall health across the lifespan. "Educating clients about the harmful effects of vaping and smoking conventional tobacco products can be a powerful motivator for change and may ultimately save lives," says Bowser. Visit your dental hygienist today to learn more about the connections between smoking, vaping, and oral health, and protect your health for tomorrow.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 29,549 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 19,000 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.

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