



# MEDIA RELEASE

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**Wednesday 14 January 2009**

## **TOUR RIDERS ADVISED TO AVOID DECAY CYCLE**

Riders taking part in the Mutual Community Challenge Tour have been advised today to consider their oral health and avoid the decay cycle and erosion of tooth enamel as they train for the ride on January 23.

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) spokesperson Dr. Angelo Papageorgiou said cyclists are a generally fit bunch but few riders are aware of the dental dangers they face.

“While there’s always the risk of injury to teeth from an accident, it’s the damage brought about by clenching and grinding and the consumption of acidic drinks and lollies that’s more concerning.”

“Distance cycling requires rehydration every 15 minutes and the frequent consumption of sugar as cyclists burn a minimum of 500 calories an hour.”

“Most cyclists will refuel with sugary sweets, energy gels and energy drinks, which all attack teeth.”

“If you get dehydrated, salivary flow diminishes. When you combine low saliva levels with prolonged exposure to acid and/or sugar in a situation where there are no opportunities to clean your teeth, you can certainly have some problems.”

“It can then become an endurance ride for teeth.”

With only two weeks before the Challenge Tour, riders have already have stepped up their training programs and need to make sure they also keep their teeth fit and healthy.

Many riders will now be training for around 10 and 15 hours a week to prepare for the race including ‘shorts bursts of effort’ as outlined in the official Challenge Tour training tips.

It’s these short bursts designed to increase heart rate and challenge the rider that can lead to clenching and grinding of teeth. This can be an issue for amateur and professional riders alike.

In fact, former US Postal team rider Tyler Hamilton, who rode alongside Lance Armstrong in the Tour de France suffered so badly from clenching to offset the exertion of a ride that he needed to have 11 teeth capped.

The Challenge Tour riders will cover a distance of up to 155kms, which will take around 5-7 hours with hydration and fuel stops every 30 – 40kms.

“On the road, we advise riders to drink plenty of fluoridated water after each ‘sugar hit’. The water acts as a mouth rinse to reduce the harm caused by the acid, says Dr. Papageorgiou.

“Sports drinks are great for fast fluid and electrolyte replacement, but try to alternate with water. These drinks are quite acidic and demineralise tooth structure if you don’t use them properly.”

“If riders need to snack during the Challenge Tour, we suggest choosing foods with less of the sticky simple sugars like bananas, dry biscuits, or rice crackers.”

The Australian Dental Association would also like to see more cyclists wearing mouthguards to protect their teeth, inhibit clenching and grinding and increase saliva flow.

The ADA also recommends cyclists discuss their training routine with their dentist and maintain a program of regular check ups.

A dentist is able to closely monitor their dentition and advise on any particular trouble spots.

For more information on maintaining healthy teeth while you ride, visit <http://www.ada.org.au/branches/sa/>

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