



MEDIA RELEASE

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GEN X UNDER THREAT FROM EROSION

While the vast majority of Generation X Australians have benefited from advances in dental care and the addition of fluoride into the water supply, they're still facing an increased risk of dental erosion according to the Australian Dental Association (ADA).

With better oral health than their parents and grandparents and a higher average life expectancy, Gen Xers are now facing new challenges as they keep their teeth for longer.

To coincide with Dental Health Week (August 4 – 10), the ADA today reported they're seeing more Gen Xers presenting with extensive dental erosion along with serious gum disease, gum recession and decay affecting the roots of the teeth.

ADASA President, Dr. Peter Alldritt, "Dental erosion is a particular concern as the risks can be minimised so easily."

"Gen Xers need to consider that they're likely to keep their teeth for another 40 to 60 years and investing in good dental health now can prevent costly restorative work in the future."

"We're concerned that as Australians get older, they appear to be investing an increasing amount of time on hair and skin care but ignoring their oral health."

Dental erosion has been called a silent epidemic and the ADA says it is a problem that needs to be managed as vigilantly as dental decay.

Dental erosion is the loss of tooth structure due to exposure to acids. This occurs when teeth are exposed to acids such as those found in some beverages and foods.

"Acidic drinks such as fruit juices, sports, soft and caffeinated drinks, and excessive alcohol consumption can exacerbate the erosion process," said Dr. Alldritt.

"Most people are aware that soft drinks and fruit juices are contributors to tooth decay because of the significant amount of sugar that these drinks can contain. A 600ml bottle of soft drink can contain up to 13 teaspoons of sugar."

"What is not so well known is that soft drinks, along with fruit juices, sports drinks, some alcoholic drinks and herbal teas and so-called "energy drinks" can also often have high-acid levels, which play a major role in the development of tooth erosion."

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) recommends limiting consumption of acidic drinks and recommends the following guidelines if consuming such drinks:

- Avoid holding or 'swishing' high acid drinks around the mouth as this increases the likelihood of dental decay and enamel erosion
- Use a straw when drinking soft drink and juices as much as possible to minimise the acid exposure to teeth
- If you do drink fruit juices, soft or sports drinks, try to consume them chilled, as cooler temperatures have been shown to be less likely to cause tooth erosion
- Drink fluoridated tap water as much as possible
- Chewing sugar free gum can stimulate saliva flow and wash these acids away
- After consuming acidic beverages, don't brush your teeth right away – brushing can remove the softened tooth layer (resulting from the acidic exposure), increasing the amount of tooth loss. Wait one hour before brushing your teeth.
- Instead of brushing, rinse with water or a fluoridated mouth rinse – this will help remove any acids remaining in the mouth.

In addition, the ADA recommends drinking plenty of fluoridated tap water, brushing, flossing and rinsing (if indicated by a dentist) and visiting the dentist for regular checkups.

For more information, visit www.ada.org.au

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