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## THE MOUTH DOESN'T LIE

### PEEP INTO NATION'S MOUTHS REVEALS SHOCKING TRUTHS

New research from a deep dive into the nation's mouths has found three quarters of us rarely or never floss or clean between our teeth.

Also, one in five adults brushes their teeth only once a day and over 60% of adults haven't seen a dentist for at least 2 years.

Among other surprising outcomes, the Australian Dental Association's (ADA) 2020 National Consumer Survey of around 25,000 people released today for Dental Health Week (2-8 August) also found:

- 4 in 10 parents report their children under 17 years drink 2 - 5 soft drinks a week, despite 83% knowing such drinks can lead to tooth decay. A sizeable number of parents appear to be unaware that fruit juice can lead to tooth decay.
- 2 in 3 adults usually visit the dentist for a specific problem rather than for a check-up, a figure that has not improved since first being recorded in 2014.
- 1 in 3 adults rate their oral health as 'poor' or 'very poor'. This increased with age to 1 in 2 adults for those over 56. The most common reason was 'don't visit the dentist enough'.

"These findings show that Australians have the capacity to improve the daily habits that contribute to good oral health," said ADA Vice President Dr Steven Liew.

"Not brushing twice a day and flossing once a day is a fast track to developing tooth decay, gum disease and a range whole of body health issues that can arise from sub-par oral health.

"Previous studies suggest that untreated advanced gum disease can increase the chances of serious cardiac events, adverse pregnancy outcomes including prematurity, Type 2 diabetes and other significant health conditions.

"Brushing your teeth for two minutes, twice a day, and flossing thoroughly every day, as well as consuming a diet low in added sugar and seeing your dentist at least once a year, all go a long way to maintaining good oral health and benefits whole of body health."

#### Other data

**Teeth whitening statistics** showed 37% people purchased a kit online and 16% from a chemist or supermarket, 16% had it done at the dental practice, and 22% did it at home under the supervision of the dentist who supplied a take-home kit.

Further, 64% said they weren't aware of the risks of teeth whitening services operated by non-dentists. These risks can include painful chemical burns to the gums and lips, and

sensitivity or pain affecting the teeth. Meanwhile 18% of respondents said they whitened yearly, 38% every 6 months, 26% bi-monthly, 15% monthly and 3% every week.

### **About the Consumer Survey**

\*The ADA's Consumer Survey was conducted in November and December 2020, and had 25,028 respondents aged 18 and over.

\*It was split between 68% metropolitan, 25% regional and 7% rural responses.

\*The gender split was 49% male and 51% female.

\*The data was collected from focus groups, phone interviews and online surveys.

**To interview Dr Liew call ADA Media Advisor Jenny Barlass 0484 869 086**

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