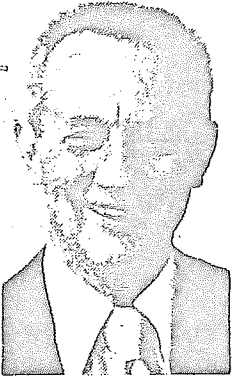


Put a little natural sparkle in your life



Wednesday, August 27, 1980

by George E. Meinig, DDS

Dear Dr. Meinig: I see the Food and Drug Administration isn't content to attempt to ban saccharin but must attack coffee as well. Why don't they leave us poor people alone?

C.S.

Dear C. S.: I'm afraid you came to the wrong place with your objection. You evidently haven't read my various very critical comments about the effects of coffee on one's health. "Coffee Wrecks Your Body," "Tea Cripples Cubs' Homerun Star" and "Saccharin is Bad for You" have been lead articles on this subject.

On many occasions I have been critical of the FDA as some of their stands on vitamins and supplements have been ridiculous. However, their current efforts to alert the public about the scientific evidence that surrounds the beverages containing caffeine are commendable.

When you consider the economic impact of such action, it is hard to believe they are even considering such a move. Caffeine appears in not only coffee and tea but cocoa, chocolate, and some soft drinks. The FDA usually does not buck billion dollar industries.

A recent study has shown that caffeine can cause birth defects. Rats fed caffeine during pregnancy caused a loss of digits on their paws. This is not surprising as caffeine causes calcium to be pulled out of the skeleton in the same manner as does sugar.

Incidentally caffeine is a drug and a harmful one in many ways. A cup of coffee contains 90 to 155

milligrams, while tea usually runs 30 to 50 milligrams but can be more when stronger or when several cups are used. A 12 ounce can of Coca Cola, Dr. Pepper, Pepsi, Mellow Yellow, or Mountain Dew contains 30 to 65 milligrams of caffeine. A.P.C.'s, Anacin, and similar analgesics usually contain 200 milligrams of caffeine.

Compared to sugar I'm not sure whether coffee is as bad or worse. It is a drug and users must eventually come to realize their desire for these beverages is an addiction. We have become a drugged society. The real honest pleasures of life are kicks from the healthful ingredients present in the foods, not from drugs. That kind of vitality is full of natural sparkle.

Dear Dr. Meinig: What natural foods, herbs, vegetables, minerals, or vitamins help to keep ridges and gums in healthy condition? Is there a natural substance that might act as an adhesive for denture wearers? What natural substances (non-poisonous) can be used for storing and cleaning dentures? I am also curious about tooth implantations.

A.W.

Dear A. W.: Gums and ridges keep shrinking for most people for the very same reasons that their teeth went bad in the first place. Dietary studies indicate such conditions are caused by nutritionally inadequate diets. Scientific investigative study has disclosed that calcium is less than one-half the recommended daily

amount when continual shrinkage of gums occurs. However many factors govern calcium utilization so a well rounded diet must be followed.

Denture wearers are inclined to be short of protein as well as calcium. Some fish, poultry or meat is necessary every day. Raw vegetable salads and 100% whole grains are essential. It is more important than ever for those that have lost their teeth to eliminate sugar, refined breads and cereals, soft drinks, and other non-nutritious foods. Too many denture wearers indulge in sweets thinking no harm can result.

I know of no natural substance that acts as an adhesive inside dentures. Generally healthy gums will support well fitting dentures. Eventually people learn to tame wild teeth without these materials if they try. When there are problems keeping them in place it is often due to faulty adjustments of the bite of the teeth or to reverse tongue swallowing habits. Generally the patient is not aware of the cause of the problem, only that the teeth loosen quite frequently.

It has always amazed me how denture wearers shy away from the easiest, most often available, excellent cleanser -- plain face soap. A good denture brush and soap cleans dentures beautifully. If rinsed well after cleaning no taste of soap will remain. For those that object to soap I recommend brushing with baking soda. Regular dentrifices and all kinds of denture cleansers

are available. The soak-em kind are not as efficient as good old fashioned scrubbing but for those who have lost some hand dexterity they are helpful.

Spare dentures stored for long periods are okay wrapped in a handkerchief and placed in a small box or plastic container. Never wrap in Kleenex or paper toweling unless also placed in a box of something distinctive as lumps of Kleenex are often inadvertently thrown away.

Teeth knocked out in accidents can often be replaced. By all means retrieve the tooth, even if some of it is fractured. Wash it off gently with plain water and place in a glass or cup of water. Better yet just put it in the mouth like a piece of gum and hold it between your teeth and cheek until you get to a dentist. If you are in a situation where a dentist is unavailable within an hour or two, ease the tooth back into the socket yourself and just hold it there for a while. The tissues will start to knit immediately. Sometimes teeth grow back in this manner without a visit to the dentist. The difficulty of self treatment is keeping the tongue and lips from moving the loosened tooth. Dentists arrest movement with a variety of splinting procedures.

Everyone has a question about nutrition. Send yours to: Dr. George E. Meinig, c/o OVN, Box 277, Ojai, CA 93023.