

GUM AND DENTAL ISSUES IN HAEMOPHILIA

Introduction

Daily cleanliness and regular dental checkups can help minimize bleeding episodes and avoid treatment. Even through good care of teeth and gums, bleeding can not be always avoided.

Good care of teeth is the key to good health. Brushing daily and regular dental checkups are essential for good dental health. It is beneficial to develop healthy habits in the childhood. Dental treatment should be done very carefully other wise it can lead to death. It is important to have treatment from a dentist who knows about haemophilia and its complications. This can prevent excess bleeding and future complications. Dental treatment should not be delayed because it will cause new problems and make the treatment difficult and lengthy.

Consult your haemophilia center immediately in case of dental or gum bleeding. They can refer you to a dentist and inform him/her about your problems.

Precautions for kids

- Brushing daily under parent's supervision. Dental checkup twice a year.
- A layer of sugar is coated on the teeth if milk or juice is given through bottle to the child at night. This layer is changed into acid with reaction of sugars and germs present in the mouth and damages teeth and cause pain. Therefore if possible, quit bottle feeding.
- Your dentist should be one who follows the instructions given by your haemophilia center.
- It is important to maintain a healthy diet for healthy teeth. For example, vegetables, fruits, wheat, meet and milk. Products made by milk contain calcium which is good for bones and teeth.

Advice for elders

- Brush twice daily. After breakfast and before going to bed.
- Get regular dental checkups and keep regular contact with your dentist.

Problems for infants

You should remember that teeth start coming at the age of 6 months.

Process of falling of teeth

Teeth start falling at the age of 5 years. If you let the teeth fall naturally, pain and bleeding both can be reduced. A falling tooth can bleed easily if touched, therefore discourage your child to touch it. If tooth has fallen and bleeding has started, you can put

a tea bag on the bleeding area and ask the child to press it firmly or bite it. Tea contains Tannic Acid which helps to stop bleeding. Stop the child from spitting, using straw, eating hard things and gargling. If bleeding does not stop even then, mix transamine capsule with water to make a paste and apply it on the affected area. Permanent teeth start coming out at the age of 6 years and continue till the age of 12 years. During this time, give soft food to the child and tell him not to chew from the new teeth. For pain relieving, consult your doctor and use a pain killer which does not contain aspirin. Children with bleeding disorders can bleed heavily when new teeth are growing. In this case, apply pressure to the affected area to stop bleeding. If bleeding does not stop, contact your haemophilia center.

Prevention of cavities

Food containing sugars are the biggest reason for cavities because this sugar reacts with germs and is converted into acid which cause holes in the teeth. If these holes are not filled, it can spoil the roots. Therefore children should avoid eating chewing gums, toffees etc. drinks such as coca cola are also harmful for the teeth. They should be given fruits, vegetables, milk etc instead.

Using fluoride

Research shows that children with higher level of fluoride have a lower probability of cavities affecting their teeth.

Fissure Sealant

Ask your dentist about fissure sealant. It is a solution which is coated over the jaw teeth and prevents collection of food and germs on the teeth.

Prevention of gum diseases

The cause of gum diseases is the coating of plaque on the gums. In the start, gums appear to be red and swollen and bleeding starts easily. With the passage of time, an empty space is formed between the teeth and gums in which germs are collected. This affects the bone under the teeth and eventually causes the tooth to fall. This can be caused because of inadequate cleanliness. In this case, scaling should be done with consultation of your haematologist.

Abstain from smoking

Gum diseases are more common in people who smoke. Smoking causes gums to swell and is harmful for the skin inside the mouth. If you don't smoke, never start it, and if you do, try to quit it with the help of a doctor. Abstain from betel nuts because they cause mouth cancer.

Prevention of dental bleeds

Injury to mouth causes bleeding and this is commonly seen in kids, especially when he starts to crawl or walk. But adults can also bleed from mouth. Bleeding can cause anxiety for the children because there are numerous blood vessels in the mouth which can cause heavy bleeding. Is important to:

- Use soft utensils and give soft toys to infants
- Keep hard plastic and sharp edged things out of the reach of children. Use plastic spoons to feed the child
- People with bleeding disorders should not play football, wrestling, boxing etc.
- Use mouth guard while playing

How to handle dental bleeds and what should be done if tooth has fallen?

Teeth can get damaged or even fall in accidents. In case a tooth has fallen, put it in water, milk or saliva, and go to a dentist immediately. It is possible that a dentist can fix your tooth. In case of bleeding, put a clean cotton piece soaked in ice water on the affected area until you reach the doctor. You should also consult your haemophilia center.

Stopping bleeds by putting pressure

Usually it is difficult to evaluate the extent of bleeding in mouth because little blood can also appear to be a lot after mixing with saliva. Apply pressure with a piece of soft cloth or tea bag to stop bleeding. Ice treatment or ice cream can also prove beneficial for little bleeds. You can also mix transamine capsule with water and apply the paste on the affected area to stop bleeding.

Prevention during healing

Wounds in mouth take 2 – 3 weeks to heal. Chilled food helps in healing. Cleaning teeth can cause the wound to start bleeding again, therefore during this period, clean your teeth very gently with a piece of cotton. Taking good care of your teeth can prevent cavities and pain because prevention is better than cure.

First step towards dental care

If you want your child to learn and perform well in school, your child should be healthy. Cavities and tooth decay can cause your child to absent from school. That is why proper dental care can make your child healthy and affect his studies positively. Do you know that how much your guidance and supervision can improve the quality of your child's life and his personality. Try to build healthy habits in your child.

Healthy nutrition

Give special attention to what your child eats and provide them with healthy food. This will keep them healthy and strengthen their teeth. Healthy diet can also prevent cavities and tooth decay. Five things which should specially be included in your diet are: dry fruits, vegetables, meat/fish, and products made by milk. Make your children drink plenty of water. Milk contains calcium which is good for teeth. Give your child proper lunch in school. Avoid giving him sweet things such as chocolates, biscuits etc because they can harm your teeth and can cause tooth decay. Therefore try to avoid sugar and fizzy drinks.

How to select a proper brush

Always use a soft, round tipped brush made of nylon. Hard brush can damage your gums. Always use a brush which can reach the ends of your teeth easily and change your brush after every three months. When buying a brush, leave the choice to the child. This will build self-confidence in the child. Remember, never use someone else's brush and never give your brush to someone because this spreads diseases.

Toothpaste

Toothpastes containing fluoride are good for your teeth. But the amount of fluoride which is good depends on the age of your child, so teach him to spit the toothpaste after brushing. Parents are a role model for their children and their habits play an important role in developing the child's habits.

- Brush twice daily. After breakfast and before going to bed
- Use a soft brush
- Brush for at least two minutes
- Parents should supervise brushing of children under 7 years
- Get regular checkups for healthy teeth

Proper way of brushing

To clean the outer part of the teeth, start brushing in a circular motion from where the teeth and gums meet. Also clean the inner part of teeth by brushing in a to and fro motion. Use the upper part of brush to clean your teeth and clean both, upper and lower jaws. Also clean the grinding teeth with the same to and fro motion. For fresh breath, brush your tongue as well.

It is necessary that you stay in regular contact with your haemophilia center for complete and comprehensive treatment.

Plan before time for factor treatment

Factors are needed before cleaning of gums, tooth filling, removing teeth, root canal or any other dental surgery. Consult your haemophilia centre for factor treatment before any such procedure.

Follow doctor's instructions after the treatment

After your dental treatment, your dentist or haemophilia center will give you some instructions. It is very important to follow those instructions until the wound has completely healed. These instructions usually encourage ice treatment or other cold things and discourage hot things like tea.

Braces

Patients with bleeding disorders can use braces if they need to. But consult your haemophilia center before undergoing any such treatment.

Wisdom teeth

Wisdom teeth start to grow after 17 years of age. There are four wisdom teeth and they take years to grow. Sometimes they are unable to grow properly because of different reasons e.g. jaws are small, growth in wrong direction etc. in this case removal of these teeth is the best option. But consult your haemophilia center before making any such decisions.

How to floss

- Brush is unable to reach and clean the inner surface between two teeth. Floss is used to clean those surfaces where the brush can not reach. Take 18 inches of floss and wrap it around the middle fingers of both the hands in such a way that when you hold the floss with your pointer finger, the length of the floss should become 2 inches
- Now slowly rub the floss between the two teeth and around the teeth
- Repeat the procedure with other teeth keeping the floss stretched and not hurting the gums
- Repeat the procedure for the upper and lower teeth and rewrap the floss in such a manner that for every tooth, you use a clean floss
- Pay equal attention to your grinding teeth as well. After flossing gargle with water

Note: Remember to tell your dentist if you are a patient of hepatitis or AIDS. Avoid spitting because it spreads diseases.