



Carla Lejarraga | Dental Hygienist

your lifestyle and your smile

You may be surprised to hear how your lifestyle affects your oral health.

Ever wonder why your dentist or hygienist asks all those questions about your lifestyle? Or gives a knowing look when you mention a lifestyle change? At each check-up, your dental team is looking and listening for clues to help detect dental changes early. Or, better still, prevent them. It's an ongoing process and part of your smile surveillance to help keep your mouth healthy.

Many people today are interested in health and fitness, and pursue an energetic exercise program. While it's important to maintain good fitness, high activity can dehydrate your body – especially during our tropical summer! Those who rehydrate with sports drinks risk serious dental erosion. The best solution is to simply drink water. It's the best rehydrator and is good for your oral health as well as being easy on your wallet.

Body builders and weightlifters should be aware of the damage teeth clenching can do. Cracking and chipping are common complaints. An appliance such as a splint or mouthguard can easily prevent these problems. (Remember the success story of triathlete Max and his Pure Power Mouthguard? You can find it on our website.)

We're also big on weight loss and special diets these days. Protein is in; carbs are out. But such diets can contribute to bad breath problems



in two ways. First of all, oral bacteria produce smelly gases from protein molecules. And second, the lungs expel ketones (a similarly smelly by-product of fat breakdown) from the bloodstream. A balanced diet is the best solution.

Dieters and reluctant eaters often suffer a dry mouth due to lack of saliva stimulation. This can result in bad breath and increased risk of cavities and gingivitis. Athletes and dieters are also more prone to disordered eating – an excessive control of calorie intake and enforced vomiting. This can lead to decay and severe and permanent dental erosion.

Regular exercise and good nutrition are essential for health and wellbeing. But it's also essential to consider the impact our activities have on our bodies. A well-balanced diet and lifestyle will help keep you smiling for life.

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