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JULIE'S HEALTH CLUB

WHERE ALTERNATIVE AND MAINSTREAM MEET
BY JULIE DEARDORFF

August 10, 2010

Five surprising threats to your teeth

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Once you get your tongue pierced, it's apparently tempting to 'play' with the tongue. The force can cause gapped teeth—and thousands of dollars in orthodontic repairs, as reported and published in the *Journal of Clinical Orthodontics*.

Other possible side effects of tongue piercing, which is becoming more common: hemorrhage, inflamed gums and in the worst cases, brain abscess, said lead author Dr. Sawsan Tabbaa, assistant professor at the School of Dental Medicine.

Still, body art is just one dental threat you may not expect. Here are four others:

Texting. Four out of five dentists surveyed by the Chicago Dental Society reported that their patients text while in the office, making it harder to communicate with patients and hampers their ability to provide care. (Still, texting did not make the top five threats, which include using the dental light to pluck eyebrows, playing games on a handheld, reading a book or a magazine.)

Nail biting. (Or using your teeth to rip off clothing tags or open bottle tops.) After decades of nail-nibbling, Chicago dentist Dr. Jeffrey Weller underwent reconstruction. His habit reshaped the bottom of his upper teeth, said his dentist, Dr. Jeffrey Weller, founder of Weller Dental. "They were scalloped, just like the shape of his nails, to accommodate his nail-biting," said Weller.

Medications: Gram for gram, some antacids and cough drops have as much—if not more-- sugar than chocolate, and while sugar isn't great for teeth in general, the real threat comes from how long the sweet stuff stays on your teeth. More serious medications called bisphosphonates are associated with a small risk of developing a condition known as osteonecrosis of the jaw, which destroys the jaw bone so make sure you tell your dentist if you're on these meds.

Eating disorders. Dentists are actually on the front lines when it comes to spotting eating disorders since mouth damage is a common sign. According to the National Eating Disorders Association. Up to 89 percent of bulimic patient show signs of tooth erosion due to stomach acid.

Stomach acid can render the teeth brittle, weak and translucent. Teeth can also change in color, shape and length a Tooth decay, meanwhile, can be aggravated by extensive tooth brushing or rinsing following vomiting.

Posted at 03:41:32 PM in Dental Health

Technorati Tags: body art, dental health, teeth, tongue piercing

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Comments

I never understood the tongue piercing thing, but a lot of these problems seem to stem from nervous habits and disorders.

Posted by: jb in indiana | August 10, 2010 at 04:15 PM

I can't imagine anybody texting during a dental appointment.

But then I don't ever text anyway, anywhere, anytime.

Posted by: The 50 Best Health Blogs | August 10, 2010 at 04:16 PM

too much, too long and/or too hard brushing erodes the gums and will aggravate gum recession which can lead to all sorts of co things that most dentists recommend

Posted by: mw11716 | August 11, 2010 at 09:43 AM

That's a great list and kind of funny too. As a dentist, I have people texting. It's annoying, but not as awkward as when their ce they can't talk.

I would add one other suprising threat to teeth. Acid reflux disease or heartburn. It causes comparable if not worse damage to t

Posted by: jonathan.campbell@comcast.net | August 11, 2010 at 10:08 AM

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