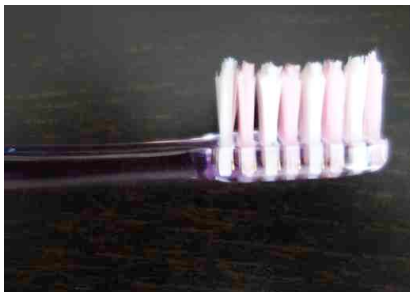## More gum disease today than 2,000 years ago

26th October, 2014

A new study shows that people today have more gum disease than people living 2,000 years ago. The study is from the university King's College in London and is published in the 'British Dental Journal'. Researchers looked at the teeth in the skulls of 303 people who lived between 200-400 AD (2,200-2,400 years ago). The skulls were found at an old burial site in the west of England. The researchers found that only 5 per cent of the skulls showed signs of gum disease. Up to 30 per cent of people in England today have gum disease. Professor Francis Hughes was surprised by what he found. He said people did not have toothbrushes or toothpaste back then and did not visit dentists, like we do today.

The main reason why modern people have more gum disease is smoking. Theya Molleson, co-author of the report, said the study shows that people's oral health has become much worse over the past 2,000 years. She added that she thinks gum disease could start going down from now as more people stop smoking. She said: "As smoking declines in the population, we should see a decline in the [numbers of people with] the disease." Gum disease happens when bacteria builds up in your mouth. The bacteria eat away at your gums and can make your teeth fall out. People can reduce the risk of gum disease by regular brushing, using mouthwash and not smoking.

Sources: *HealthCanal.com / Nature.com / nhm.ac.uk*

Writing

It is better to clean your teeth four times a day than two times a day. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / gum disease / university / researchers / teeth / surprised / toothbrush / dentist / main reason / smoking / oral health / population / bacteria / regular brushing / risk

True / False

a) People from 2,000 years ago had healthier gums than people today. T / F

b) Researchers looked at the skulls of over 3,000 people. T / F

c) Less than 6% of the 2,000-year-old skulls had signs of gum disease. T / F

d) People 2,000 years ago started using the world's first toothpaste. T / F

e) The study says smoking is the biggest cause of gum disease. T / F

f) A researcher said she thinks gum disease will increase from now. T / F

g) Gum disease is because of a build-up of bacteria in your mouth. T / F

h) Mouthwash actually increases the likelihood of getting gum disease. T / F

Synonym Match

1.	study	a.	ancient
2	published	b.	go to
3.	old	c.	goes down
4.	signs	d.	printed
5.	visit	e.	lower
6.	main	f.	frequent
7.	much	g.	research
8.	declines	h.	a lot
9.	reduce	i.	evidence
10.	regular	j.	biggest

Discussion – Student A

a) Why don't people know that smoking is bad for your gums?

b) Who should tell us about oral hygiene?

c) What things about your teeth do you worry about?

d) What would you do if your teeth fell out?

e) How does reading this article make you feel about your teeth?

f) How can our teeth survive without toothpaste and brushing?

g) How important is it to floss and use mouthwash?

h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. people today
2. the teeth in the
3. found at an old
4. the skulls showed signs
5. people did not have toothbrushes or
6. The main
7. oral
8. she thinks gum disease could
9. bacteria build
10. reduce the risk of gum disease

a. toothpaste back then
b. of gum disease
c. by regular brushing
d. health
e. skulls of 303 people
f. start going down
g. have more gum disease
h. up in your mouth
i. burial site
j. reason why

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you do to look after your gums?

b) Are you surprised by what you read?

c) Why did people have better teeth 2,000 years ago?

d) How important is it to care for your teeth and gums?

e) What kind of condition are your teeth and gums in?

f) Is it easy to look after your teeth and gums?

g) What would you like to change about your teeth and gums?

h) What do you think of going to the dentist?

Spelling

1. liphesubd in the 'British Dental Journal'

2. the luskls of 303 people

3. an old iaburl site

4. Hughes was pirrseusd by what he found

5. He said people did not have hstbtehsrouo

6. visit sdstneti

7. The main nreaos why

8. people's laro health

9. in the outoippnal

10. we should see a deeilnc in the numbers

11. cbatraei builds up in your mouth

12. alrrgue brushing

Role Play

Role A – The dentist
You think the dentist is the best thing for oral hygiene. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): mouthwash, regular brushing or no sweets.

Role B – Mouthwash
You think mouthwash is the best thing for oral hygiene. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): the dentist, regular brushing or no sweets.

Role C – Regular brushing
You think regular brushing is the best thing for oral hygiene. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): mouthwash, the dentist or no sweets.

Role D – No sweets
You think no sweets is the best thing for oral hygiene. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): mouthwash, regular brushing or the dentist.

Speaking – Oral hygiene

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important for oral hygiene at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- using mouthwash
- no smoking
- chewing gum
- no sweets
- regular brushing
- rinsing after eating
- visits to the dentist
- flossing

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.

Answers – Synonym Match

1.	g	2.	d	3.	a	4.	i	5.	b
6.	j	7.	h	8.	c	9.	e	10.	f