

Supplements

and Oral Health

“Why must we supplement? Because the food that comes to most of our tables no longer has the nutrients we need.”

“I’m not an expert on nutrition and supplementation,” says Chapel Hill Holistic Dentist Michael Willock, “but I am an avid student. I constantly read the work of experts, and talk with experts. So I am very comfortable counseling my patients about critical issues of toxicity and supplements that have a direct impact on oral health.”

His interest in such health matters led to the recent completion of an 83-hour post-graduate course in environmental medicine for the health care professional at the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

“A major focus of this course,” he notes, “was study of the natural history of environmental illnesses, chemical sensitivities, and the impact of such heavy metals as mercury and nickel and cadmium—metals commonly used in dentistry. There was also emphasis on neurotoxicity, endocrine toxicity, the effect of specific compounds on the immune system, and—of great importance—effective methods to detoxify the body.”

AMALGAM FILLINGS

“It’s increasingly understood that one of the important sources of toxins in the system of many people is the mercury in amalgam dental fillings,” he points out, “and I’m frequently asked by patients to remove these fillings, after consultation with their primary care physicians and appropriate testing. Often the result is a noticeable improvement in health.”

Amalgam fillings, he notes, are typically a 50-50 mix of mercury and silver with various amounts of tin, copper, and zinc added to give different properties to the mix.

“Mercury is the second most toxic element on the planet, after plutonium. It is considered a dangerous material by both government agencies and the medical community, and we must take special precautions to both store it and use it,” Dr. Willock notes.

And it’s possible to protect yourself from mercury, he says:

- Avoid exposure to the substance, including seafoods high in mercury.
- Test urine, hair, and stool for mercury levels. Seek a qualified physician’s advice about chelation therapy to remove high levels of mercury.
- Aged garlic extract is known to neutralize mercury toxicity, while removing a great deal of mercury, over time, from the brain.
- Studies show that natural vitamin E protects against mercury damage.
- Alpha-lipoic acid, a natural and powerful antioxidant, is also an efficient way to remove mercury, and selenium neutralizes mercury within tissue and promotes removal of mercury from the body.

ORAL HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS

“I take a rich assortment of supplements with breakfast and with my evening meal,” notes Dr. Willock, “and I’m increasingly aware of the inter-connectedness of all parts of



Supplements are an important part of Dr. Willock’s life, and, as he gains expertise, he shares his knowledge about nutrition and supplements with his patients.

the body. If you have gum disease, it can affect your brain, your heart, and induce aches and pains in other parts of your body. Most often, I share information with my patients about supplements that have a direct impact on dental health, such as CoQ10 and alpha-lipoic acid.”

COENZYME Q10

CoQ10, explains Dr. Willock, is a member of a family of naturally occurring substances known as quinones “which are found everywhere in nature. They are essential for generating energy in all living things that use oxygen and power the mitochondria in our cells.

“Scientists tell us there are about 100 trillion cells in the human body, and each cell must produce its own energy in order to do its work. Biological chemical reactions which produce energy require helper substances, known as enzymes. To work properly, enzymes require a mineral, such as magnesium or zinc, and a non-protein substance, called a coenzyme. For energy to be produced in every cell of the body, the coenzyme it specifically requires is Coenzyme Q10. Some body organs have greater amounts of CoQ10 because they have higher energy requirements—such as the heart and the liver.

“We often talk about how ubiquitous, and important, the issue of gum disease is in our country. Periodontal disease is really at epidemic levels. And a constant feature of gum disease is a deficiency of CoQ10 in the gum tissue cells. Normal gum tissue shows no such deficiency. When gum tissue has a deficiency of CoQ10 of 25 percent or more, it is virtually certain to be associated with periodontal disease.

“This leads researcher to believe that CoQ10 is needed to properly repair gum tissue. And in fact, controlled double-blind scientific studies showed that supplementation with as little as 50 milligrams of CoQ10 per day results in a significant reduction of gum inflammation, with faster healing and tissue repair.”

ALPHA-LIPOIC ACID

Alpha-lipoic acid is another substance naturally found in the body, and like CoQ10 it is a powerful antioxidant that stimulates cells to produce more energy.

“I recommend this very highly to my patients because it is a substance that lowers blood sugar, removes mercury, arsenic and cadmium from the body—including the brain—increases the level of CoQ10 and glutathione to cells and controls the expression of some genes. It’s a real worker-bee.

“Because of these exceptional qualities, alpha-lipoic acid—when combined with other antioxidants and cell protectors—greatly increases their effectiveness,” says Dr. Willock.

THE FOOD WE EAT

It’s important to realize, the doctor says, “that the vital supplements we all need don’t work very well if they are taken in conjunction with a bad diet. It’s extremely important to understand that what we eat makes the biggest difference in our health and longevity. And the

unfortunate truth is, many people not only eat large amounts of unhealthy foods—they also rarely eat healthy foods. That is a combination that attacks good health.

“Experts offer a great deal of important advice: buy locally grown foods that are free of pesticides and herbicides; and buy organically fed and free-range meats. Washing vegetables and fruits is critical. A healthy lifestyle means eating the right kinds of foods, including fruits and vegetables and other foods that are organic, whole grain, unprocessed or raw, and contain no added sugars, chemicals, or synthetic ingredients of any kind. It also includes regular exercise, and avoidance of environmental toxins whenever possible.

“Why must we supplement? Because the food that comes to most of our tables no longer has the nutrients we need. In the name of production and profit, we are devastating our food supply. I often refer my patients to a well-known DVD called ‘Food, Inc.’ There’s a line on the jacket that says this documentary ‘reveals surprising—and often shocking truths—about what we eat, how it’s produced, and who we have become as a nation.’ I agree—it does all that and more.

“For more information, visit www.russellblaylockmd.com. Dr. Blaylock, a neurosurgeon, has a library of information available to subscribers of his newsletter.”

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A holistic approach to oral health and wellness