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PRESS RELEASE

TO: Marquette County Media

FROM: Rebecca Maino, RDH, BS
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DATE: October 2, 2017 through October 31, 2017

SUBJECT: October is National Dental Hygiene Month

October is “National Dental Hygiene Month.” The Marquette County Health Department and the U.P. Wide Smiles Oral Health Initiative would like to remind residents that good oral health is an integral part of overall health.

Did you know that dental decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood? Or that an estimated 51.7 million school hours are lost each year due to dental-related illnesses? Both of these statements are true and according to the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this rampant tooth decay is easily preventable. Access to appropriate fluoride, education, and the practice of good oral health habits throughout childhood can help decrease lost school hours.

Fluoride is the 13th most common element in our earth’s crust and is naturally present in most water sources, even in the oceans. So, fluoride is a mineral that naturally helps fight tooth decay. That is why it is often called “nature’s cavity fighter.” When we brush our teeth with fluoride toothpaste, or use other fluoride dental products, we help to prevent cavities and strengthen tooth enamel.

On January 25, 1945, Grand Rapids, Michigan became the world's first city to adjust the level of fluoride in its drinking water supply. About 10-15 years later, children in that community developed 50-70% less tooth decay than area children did prior to fluoridation. We fortify many things in our diet to make them healthier, such as adding iron to cereal, iodine to salt, and vitamin D to milk. Fluoridating water is very similar. As communities, we are able to adjust the fluoride levels in our water supplies to make them healthier. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) fluoridated water supplies are the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. The CDC has proclaimed community water fluoridation one of the “10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century.”

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For optimal dental health, children need one source of systemic (ingested) fluoride--either fluoridated water or prescription fluoride tablets if they have non-fluoridated water. They also need sources of topical fluoride, such as fluoride toothpastes and rinses. There is added benefit from having both systemic and topical fluoride working together to help make their teeth stronger and resistant to cavities. Studies show that both systemic and topical fluoride can also help adults reduce the incidence of tooth decay.

“Remember to brush your teeth at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, floss once a day, limit sugary foods and drinks, and don’t forget to visit the dentist every six months,” said Rebecca Maino, hygienist with the Marquette County Health Department. “Regular visits to the dentist can identify dental problems and stop them from developing into large ones. Prevention is the key.”

The Marquette County Health Department and the U.P. Wide Smiles Oral Health Initiative would like to remind residents that good oral hygiene habits start at home - if parents make it a habit to take care of their own teeth, their children will too. Remember, a healthy smile is a beautiful smile! Call your dentist today. For more information go to:

<http://www.adha.org/national-dental-hygiene-month>

<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en>

<https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/>

http://www.co.marquette.mi.us/departments/health_department/community_outreach/dental_outreach.php#.WdKUOFtSy1s