

Clinical Correspondence

Herbs for teeth and gums

Candis Cantin Packard

Many of the clients who I see have had rather serious dental problems: root canals, gum disease, crowns, bridges and deep pockets. Many of us in the industrialized nations just figure that teeth and gum problems are just the way it is in life. From my research it seems that this has not always been the case. I have read in numerous texts that this is not a natural situation and that many earlier cultures did not suffer from such conditions.

In fact, in the 1920s, Dr. Weston Price, DDS, found that the people who adhered to a traditional diet had very low incidence of tooth or gum diseases. He found this to be true in villages in Switzerland, remote villages in other parts of Europe, South Sea Islands and other locations. He said that 1% of the populations had tooth decay and a high percent in some villages was 4%. Currently, 90% of the people in the industrialized countries can expect dental decay and gum diseases. He said that when industrialized food entered these remote places, he found that there was a drastic increase in dental problems which included crowding of the teeth, misshapen teeth, hair lip, dental cavities, tooth loss and other abnormalities of the facial bones. He found this change to occur in just one generation of poor eating habits.

So now I have to tell you of an incident that occurred with me and helped to handle some dental problems. One night as I was sleeping I found myself in the dream state, making a tooth powder that was going to help handle failing gums and gum pockets. The next morning as I was teaching a class on herbs and I stopped my lecture mid-stream and told the students that I had to make the tooth powder because the dream was still with me so strong. I took out all the ingredients and made a tasty yet effective product.

Here are the ingredients:

White oak bark - one-half oz.

myrrh - one-half oz.

bayberry -one-fourth oz.

goldenseal - one-eighth oz.

cinnamon-cloves combination - one tsp.

stevia and spearmint to taste

Purchase powdered herbs or grind them yourself and then blend them together. Store them in a small glass bottle in the bathroom.

Many of these herbs are very astringent, which means they will tighten up tissue. The goldenseal is a mild antibiotic, anti-bacterial herb, the cinnamon and cloves are effective dentifrices and the stevia is good at fighting the buildup of plaque as well as a potent sweetener; 30 times sweeter than sugar without the deleterious effects. I added spearmint for the taste.

I have been using this tooth powder each day; morning and evening. When I went to the dentist she told me I had great gums. (Just to let the readers know I am almost 48 which is prime time in our culture for gum diseases.) I dampen my tooth brush and then press the powder on the gums in front and in back of the teeth; I don't necessarily "brush." I usually leave it on for a minute or so then rinse out.

The next thing you can do for the gums is to buy some of Johnson and Johnson's Stim-U-Dents. These are little wedge shaped sticks that you gently push between the teeth to remove plaque and food. I add to the stick the essential oil of Tea Tree. This oil is known as a powerful anti-bacterial and anti-biotic. It was used extensively by the Aborigines of Australia in their medicine making. The tea tree between the teeth will help to break up bacteria colonies that harbor in the crevices and pockets. The only precautions that I have about it is that sometimes it can be very strong on the lips or the tissue. If this is so then dilute the tea tree in some sesame oil; 20 drops to one ounce of sesame oil and use this blend instead.

The third step is to floss the teeth really well. Make sure the floss goes next to each tooth and around the gum that holds each tooth in place. I sometimes put a little tea tree oil on the floss.

The last step is to make a gargle from the herbs Echinacea, Usnea, Hydrastis, and myrrh. These can be purchased from the health food stores as a tincture and then a dropper full put into a half cup of warm water. Gargle and let the wash stay in your mouth for a few minutes if you have a severe condition.

I have had clients tell me what great results they have had from this routine. Gum pockets that are measured as sizes six and seven have tightened up to size three and four, which is closer to normal range. A dentist had told one lady that she would have to undergo gum surgery due to her gum situation so I gave her this routine to follow. She called me after one month to let me know that the dentist told her that she would not need the surgery at this time because the whole terrain of her mouth had changed.

It is important that we do not consume too many sweeteners, soda or fruit juices, nor drink too much

lemon water. Lemons tend to erode the enamel off of teeth.

We should try to keep our bones strong as well. According to many of the oriental systems of healing, the bones nourish the teeth. I have come up with a high calcium and mineral blend. The minerals from the herbs are very easy to assimilate so they should be taken on a daily basis.

I blend in about equal proportions of chamomile, nettles, horsetail, alfalfa, oatstraw, marshmallow root, spearmint, licorice and a little stevia to sweeten.

This tea tastes delicious and is so calming and nourishing for you. We may not reverse the damage done to our teeth and gums 100% but we can take care of what we have and do our best to help with some rejuvenation.

I personally call my teeth and gum problems my Oreokarma, because of all the cookies and sweets that I ate as a teen. I am hopefully creating some good karma now with my greater awareness and herbal medicine.

American Herbalists Guild

The American Herbalists Guild is an organization for those engaged in or studying the clinical use of herbal medicines. Founded in 1989, the AHG has 1200 members, and is the oldest and largest botanical medicine practitioner organization in the United States.

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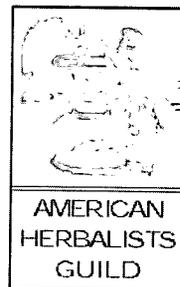
American Herbalists Guild

The AHG's primary goals are to:

- Honor diversity in herbal medicine, ranging from traditional indigenous models of herbalism to modern clinical phytotherapy
- Establish AHG professional membership as a recognizable standard of competency in botanical medicine
- Encourage the development of high standards of education that promote well-trained professional practitioners who offer high-quality herbal care
- Promote ecological health and increase awareness of issues surrounding plant sustainability
- Strengthen the network of support and communication between herbal practitioners nationally and internationally
- Foster high standards of ethics and integrity in the education and the practice of therapeutic herbalism
- Promote cooperation between herbal practitioners and other health care providers, integrating herbalism into community health care
- Serve as a liaison to other professional associations and regulatory agencies
- Promote research in herbal medicine.

If you would like to find out more about joining the American Herbalists Guild, please visit us at www.americanherbalist.com or contact:

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