

VARIETY OF INFORMATION

- Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) has been called the "most common illness you never heard of." It is a neurologic disorder associated with aging. The feeling of "bugs under the skin" in the lower leg, most often at night, causes spasms or the need to move the legs often. People with RLS are often referred to as "night walkers".

The cause is unknown and treatment is challenging. Mainly found in 10% of the North American and European white population, it affects men and women equally at midlife but women more often in older age, and 20% of those over 80 are affected. Not just being annoying to the individual and their spouse/partner, it causes fatigue due to restless sleep. Avoiding caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol can help.

Regarding dental visits for people with RLS it is best to schedule a short morning appointment. The medications given for this condition often cause a dry mouth, which increases cavities, so practice good oral hygiene each day, be seen by your dentist regularly, reduce sweets, and brush with a prescribed fluoridated toothpaste. Never suck on sugary hard candy or cough drops if you have a dry mouth as it can quickly destroy teeth. One drug that helps with RLS causes a condition called, "Black Hairy Tongue".

- "Uncontrolled Barking of a Dog", was voted the most annoying in a survey of 48 sounds. Annoying sounds can lead to the grinding of teeth, TMJ problems, the loss of teeth associated with gum disease, and for the owners of persistently barking dogs, sometimes the loss of sound teeth. More people lose teeth in Bar's than any other eating or drinking establishment. Alcohol is the main drink associated with tooth loss.

- Ancient Mouthwash. Egyptians used many products to freshen breath. They supposedly chewed sodium carbonate and dried plant material, such as, myrrh, mastic, cypress grass, and lily. Also, they rinsed with a mixture of honey, water, goose fat, cumin, frankincense, and ocher. A Greek physician suggested a mouthwash consisting of olive leaves, milk, pickled olive juice, gum myrrh with wine and oil, pomegranate peels, nutgalls, and vinegar. In Rome, slaves often cleaned their masters' teeth, and they provided rinses made with urine. Urine imported from Portugal was popular because they thought the people there had more strength. Urine continued to be a main ingredient for tooth cleaning well into the 18th century. Some treatment of oral diseases consisted of various mixtures of herbs, minerals, ground up mouse bones, and the urine of a child.

- The first known toothbrushes, made with hog bristles, were discovered in tombs in China. Later versions were found to have been made with hair from horses and badgers. Nylon bristles were introduced in 1938 by Dupont. Cheap toothbrushes have microscopically sharp nylon ends that damage gums and teeth; well known brands have rounded ends. Buy a well known brand, like Oral-B, Butler, etc. soft-bristled brush as it will normally last three months; \$2.50 is about 1 cent per brushing.

- During the Dark Ages (400-1400) it was believed that if a person got a tooth from a "hanged" criminal it could grow another tooth. I have a very old Dental Dictionary that states it is common for older people to grow more teeth, called the "climacteric dentition". Not true, but more likely roots from broken-off teeth, or wisdom, or other previously impacted teeth or bone particles that may erupt later in life.

- By the numbers: 3 is a common age for children to start to be seen for regular dental care. 8th century the first set of dentures were made. 20% of people between the age of 20 and 60 in developed countries wear braces. 20th of September is "Love Your Teeth Day" in China, land of over 1.3 billion people, where there is about one dentist for every 65,000 people. 32 is the number of teeth adults normally develop, 28 if the "wisdom teeth" are removed, and children typically have 20 "baby" teeth. 60 is the number of herbs listed for Chinese dental treatment. 1000 times sweeter than refined sugar is the Mexican plant called "Lippa Dulcis", and it does not cause cavities. 40,000 lbs. per square inch is about as hard as humans can bite with natural teeth, only 15 lbs./sq. in. with dentures.