

The EFP calls for action to reduce the burden of tooth decay and gum disease

- **Today, the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) launches an awareness campaign to invite the public and authorities to improve oral health**
- **A new website (perioandcaries.efp.org) provides recommendations for health professionals, researchers, policymakers and the public**
- **Increased awareness is needed of the link between oral health and other medical conditions, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease**

Brussels, Belgium. 11 January 2018. In order to call attention to the growing burden of tooth decay and severe gum disease (1), and to the simple and cost-effective preventive interventions available to address these conditions, the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) is launching the *Perio and Caries* awareness campaign today.

Caries and periodontal diseases are among the most common non-communicable diseases (2) yet they are largely preventable. Not only do they lead to tooth loss, which severely impacts quality of life; recent studies have linked gum disease to serious health issues such as diabetes (3), cardiovascular diseases (4) and even cancer (5).

The *Perio and Caries* initiative is directed towards dental and other health professionals, researchers, the public and policymakers. The 30 national societies that comprise the EFP will promote the campaign in their countries, with actions targeted at local communities and authorities. Recommendations are based on the consensus of over 75 experts in the field of periodontology and cariology who carefully analyzed the existing scientific evidence during the EFP Perio Workshop 2016 (6).

A dedicated website (perioandcaries.efp.org), also launched today, offers up-to-date information and recommendations, including infographics and key messages, for all stakeholders.

“Retaining healthy teeth is a vital issue,” explained Nicola West, Professor of Periodontology, University of Bristol, UK and author of the recommendations. “Tooth loss leads to worse nutritional status and negatively impacts patients’ quality of life as well as national health systems.”



“Periodontal disease is a warning sign for other health issues such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease,” said Prof West. “Therefore, the EFP is calling for increased collaboration between dental and general health research and for oral health to be considered as an integral part of overall health. Specific attention should be given to the needs of the growing ageing population and to providing equal access to dental care for patients from all socio-economic backgrounds,” she added.

“Another important issue is the need to advocate for nutritional policies that reduce access to sugary foods in public areas, especially in educational and recreational environments,” highlighted Prof West.

“Our main message is that tooth loss, periodontal diseases and caries are nearly always preventable. There is an urgent need to reinforce public education. Following simple recommendations such as brushing teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, reducing the amount and frequency of sugar and starch in your diet, staying away from tobacco and seeing your dentist twice a year, would improve dental and overall health as well as reduce the economic burden of gum disease and tooth decay.”

Prof West concluded: “We hope the public and health authorities will heed our campaign’s motto: *‘Teeth are for a lifetime. Take action!’* “

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Notes for Editors

Perio & Caries is an independent project of the EFP and its Scientific Workshop Committee. The dissemination of the findings is supported through an unrestricted grant from Colgate-Palmolive.

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About the EFP - the global benchmark in periodontology

The European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) is the leading global voice on gum health and gum disease and the driving force behind: a) EuroPerio, the most important periodontal conference in the world; b) European Gum Health Day, the main global awareness initiative on gum health; and c) Perio Workshop, the leading meeting on state-of-the-art periodontal science. Furthermore, the EFP edits the *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, one of the most authoritative scientific publications in this field. www.efp.org

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