

Unlocking the Secret to a Healthy Life: Your Smile's Surprising Role

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Did you ever stop to think about the impact of the snacks and goodies you offer your hardworking employees? What employees munch on during busy work hours can have a profound effect on their overall health.

Let's dive into the fascinating world of oral health and its surprising connection to your employees' well-being. Recent studies have illuminated a strong link between what we eat and the health of our teeth and mouth. In fact, there's solid evidence that ties oral health to the risk of chronic conditions (Guo et al., 2023). Neglecting oral health can lead to tooth loss, bone loss, or even systemic infections if left untreated. Shockingly, poor oral health can up the risk of heart attacks and cardiovascular diseases by a whopping 34% (Tilly, 2016).



Now, the folks at Healthy People 2030 have set some ambitious goals to improve the oral health of Americans. By 2030, they're aiming to increase the percentage of preventive dental care visits to 79.9%—especially among low-income families. And the good news is, most dental insurance plans cover those essential annual check-ups and cleanings, which can prevent gum disease and dental decay, potentially warding off other chronic health conditions.

Have you ever considered what lurks inside your workplace vending machine? It turns out that our nation shells out a whopping \$124 billion on dental care every year, with a hefty \$45 billion lost in productivity due to dental emergencies. Emergency dental care can set you back an average of \$450, and it's not always fully covered by insurance.

Most vending machines tend to stock sugary drinks and snacks, and many seemingly innocent foods harbor hidden sugars. Consuming excess sugar doesn't just spell trouble for your employees' teeth; it also heightens the risk of tooth decay, diabetes, and cardiovascular issues.

So, what's the takeaway from all this research? Oral health is more than just a winning smile. This October, why not take a moment to review the snack options you provide your employees. Consider how you can champion their wellness this fall by promoting dental hygiene, discouraging tobacco use, encouraging water consumption, urging at least one annual dental visit, and even offering sugar-free gum as a between-meal treat.

The evidence is crystal clear: when it comes to your employees' well-being, their oral health matters more than you might have thought. Make a conscious choice to support their overall wellness this season.

Sources:

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