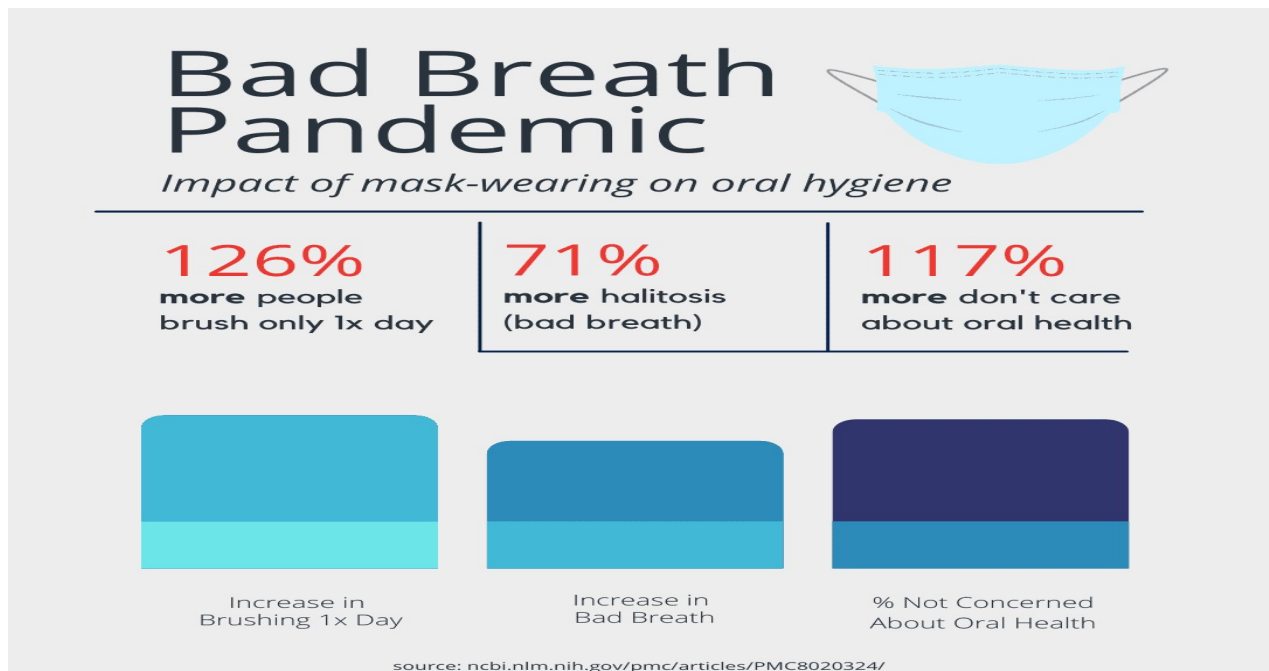




Sydney Dentist Warns of Study Showing Poor Oral Hygiene During Pandemic

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Sydney, Australia: NSW is currently in the grips of a lengthy lockdown that requires people to wear a mask when in public spaces, in order to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Sydney dentist Dr Alfred Tsang from Wahroonga Dental says mask wearing is important, but can create problems for people who don't take care of their teeth and gums.

During the last few months, he's seen more patients with tooth decay because they've only been brushing their teeth once a day, or not at all.

"We're particularly concerned about people who neglect their oral hygiene during lockdowns because prolonged mask wearing creates the perfect environment for decay-forming bacteria to thrive in your mouth," Dr Alfred Tsang said.

This is because harmful bugs love the dry conditions that occur when our mouths produce less saliva, due to a tendency to take shallow breaths and drink less water while wearing a mask.

The terms for this is "mask mouth" (dryness, bad breath and bleeding gums).

Dentists recommend strategies to protect oral health, but unfortunately brushing frequency is declining during these stressful times when people are hiding their teeth behind their masks.

Dr Tsang's observations about worsening oral habits are backed up by a study that was recently published in the Journal of Clinical and Experimental Dentistry.

What the research shows:

Researchers analysed survey responses from 1346 participants, to see what impact face masks have on oral hygiene habits.

The results revealed that participants care less about their oral hygiene during the pandemic.

For example, the number of people brushing their teeth only once a day increased by 126 per cent during the mask-wearing period.

There was also a 71 per cent increase in the number of people experiencing halitosis, and a jump in the number of people with bruxism (teeth grinding ? often associated with stress).

Nearly all participants (98 per cent) said they cared about oral hygiene before the pandemic, but this figure fell by 117 per cent during the pandemic.

This is worrying, considering that masks create the perfect environment for bacteria to thrive, if people don't look after their teeth.

Dr Tsang recommends the following to prevent 'mask mouth' by looking after your oral hygiene. "I recommend you drink lots of water throughout the day to keep your mouth moist, wash away food particles and neutralise lingering acid. Brush your teeth at least twice a day (morning and night) with a fluoridated toothpaste, for around two minutes each time. Don't forget to brush your gums with gentle pressure. Floss your teeth every day, or every second day. Buy a tongue scraper and gently scrape your tongue every morning to get rid of lingering bacteria. Alternatively, brush your tongue when you brush your teeth. Consume fewer sugary foods and drinks, because bad bacteria loves sugar as much as your taste buds do. There's nothing wrong with having a sweet treat every now and then, but don't go overboard. Eat more nourishing

foods to strengthen your teeth against decay. Chew sugar-free gum (even while wearing a mask) to stimulate your glands to produce more saliva. And make sure you visit your dentist at least once a year for a check-up and thorough cleaning session."

As an essential service, Wahroonga Dental is open during NSW lockdown. They are still seeing patients for urgent problems that include dental pain, discomfort when eating and other issues. Their experienced team follows all health guidelines and takes every precaution to protect the health of patients and staff.

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For more information about Wahroonga Dental, contact the company here: Wahroonga Dental Alfred Tsang (02) 9489 2928 reception@wahroongadental.com.au Suite 3, 9a Railway Avenue, Wahroonga, NSW, 2076

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Wahroonga Dental

Wahroonga Dental delivers comprehensive dental care designed to enrich the oral health of your entire family

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