

Dentists Are Usually the First to Notice the Tell-Tale Signs of Menopause

July 20, 2023

Sydney, New South Wales - July 20, 2023 -
Sydney, New South Wales - Menopause is often associated with hot flashes, muscle aches and hormonal fluctuations. These symptoms typically occur between the ages of 45 and 55, when most women approach the end of their reproductive years.

However, there?s far less awareness about widespread menopause-related oral health problems, which can lead to permanent tooth loss and bone degradation, if left untreated.

Nearly 50 percent of menopausal women present with symptoms in their oral cavity, according to one UK study with 13 million participants. Typical symptoms include tooth sensitivity, mouth ulcers, cavities, receding gums, oral thrush, loose teeth and difficulty swallowing.

Dr Alistair Graham from Mona Vale Dental says oral health problems are also common among Australian women going through menopause, due to lower levels of estrogen during this natural phase. The mouth contains many cells that need estrogen to function optimally and produce saliva. As estrogen levels drop, it becomes harder for the oral cavity to maintain a healthy balance between beneficial and harmful bacteria.

Adverse bacteria is more likely to accumulate, without adequate saliva levels to wash it away.

Dentists are often the first to notice the tell-tale signs of menopause during routine examinations. Many of Dr Graham?s patients are surprised when he explains their teeth and gums are particularly vulnerable to hormonal changes during menopause and just before it begins (perimenopause).

?I?ve treated many patients who take good care of their oral health, but still develop tooth pain, bleeding gums and other symptoms when their estrogen levels drop,? Dr Graham said.

He says most women don?t hear this information from endocrinologists and gynaecologists, who are generally unaware about the link between menopause and oral health complications.

Dr Graham continued, ?There needs to be more awareness on all levels, so women know to take extra steps to protect their teeth and gums during menopause. It?s particularly important for women in this phase of their life to visit their dentist at least once a year, as early dental intervention can reverse many symptoms, before they become more difficult to treat. Many menopause-related oral symptoms can be treated with a deep cleaning treatment and prescribed medication, before the situation worsens. In serious cases, surgery may be required to treat the repercussions of widespread oral infection.?

Dr Alistair Graham recently published an article titled ?does menopause affect teeth and gums?, which examines the early warning signs of menopause-related oral health conditions, as well as treatment and prevention options. Common oral health symptoms related to menopause include dry mouth, burning mouth, cavities, bad breath, loose teeth, a sore throat and mouth ulcers.

As far as prevention is concerned, patients are encouraged to take good care of their oral hygiene by brushing and flossing regularly, increasing their water intake and chewing sugar-free gum to keep the mouth moist. The article also discusses the controversy around hormone therapy. This has been shown to ease menopausal symptoms, but is associated with serious side effects in some cases.

People from the Northern Beaches and surrounding areas seek out award-winning Mona Vale Dental for regular check-ups and treatments. Their team is experienced in treating oral health complications related to menopause. They also show patients what steps to take to protect their oral health during this natural transition.

Mona Vale Dental can be contacted on (02) 9997 1100.
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Mona Vale Dental and Implant Centre

Mona Vale Dental's highly skilled team of dentists, hygienists and support staff provide the highest quality of dental care to thousands of people across Sydney's Northern Beaches.

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