

## Brushing teeth halts heart disease

When was the last time you visited the dentist? How often do you brush your teeth? If your answer to the latter question is twice a day then this, according to dentists, is the right answer. People who fail to brush their teeth twice a day are putting themselves at risk of disease, say researchers. A recent study in Scotland of more than 11,000 adults found those with poor oral hygiene had a 70% increased risk of heart disease compared with those who brushed their teeth twice a day. The British Medical Journal study backs previous work showing a link between gum disease and heart problems. But a charity said oral health was just one factor in good heart health. It is known that inflammation in the body, including in the mouth and gums, has an important role in the build up of clogged arteries, which can lead to a heart attack. But this is the first time researchers have looked at whether the frequency of teeth brushing has any bearing on the risk of developing heart disease. If you don't brush your teeth, your mouth can become infected with bacteria which can cause inflammation.

The survey discovered that overall, 6 out of 10 people said they visited the dentist every 6 months and 7 out of 10 reported brushing their teeth twice a day. Over the 8 year study period there were 555 "cardiovascular events" such as heart attacks, 170 of which were fatal. Taking into account factors that affect heart disease, such as social class, obesity, smoking and family history the researchers found those who brushed their teeth twice a day were at a lower risk. Those with poor oral hygiene also tested positive in blood samples for proteins which are suggestive of inflammation. Judy O'Sullivan from the British Heart Foundation: "Good personal hygiene is a basic element of a healthy lifestyle. But if you want to help your heart, you should eat a balanced diet, avoid smoking and take part in regular physical activity." Professor Damien Walmsley, scientific advisor to the British Dental Association: "If people brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, visit their dentist regularly and restrict sugary snacks to mealtimes; this will go a long way towards keeping the teeth and gums in a healthy state for life."

**Category: Medical English / Dentists / Teeth**  
**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

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## EXERCISES

1. **Teeth and toothpaste:** How often do you brush your teeth? What toothpaste do you use? Why this brand? Go round the room swapping stories.

2. **Visiting the dentist:** When did you last visit the dentist? What did you have done? Go round the room swapping stories.

3. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - we need to do some work!

4. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

5. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

6. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

7. **Let's think!** Think of five things you might see in a dental surgery. Then add five things you might have done there. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these?

Five things you might see at a dental surgery	Five things you might have done there
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. **Let's think!** Swap partners. With your new partner on the board write as many words to do with '**teeth brushing**' as you can. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

9. **Let's talk dentists and teeth!** *In pairs:* You are on Skype talking to your friend in another country. The conversation gets onto brushing your teeth and comparing dentists in your country and your friend's country. Discuss. *5-minutes*.

Brushing teeth halts heart disease – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

10. What is/are... With your partner discuss the following... Then **either** - when do we use them? **Or** - what are they for? **Or** what are they created by?

...plaque?	...a cavity?
...false teeth?	...a dental x-ray?
...dental teeth whitening?	...fluoride?
...a dental implant/filling?	...tooth decay

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

11. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

**Student A**

- 1) What country was the survey conducted in?
- 2) How many adults took part in the survey?
- 3) What did 6 out of 10 people say?
- 4) Sum up what Professor Damien Walmsley said.
- 5) How long was the study period?

**Student B**

- 1) How many cardiovascular events were there?
- 2) What did Judy O'Sullivan say?
- 3) What does inflammation in the body do?
- 4) According to dentists how many times a day should you brush your teeth?
- 5) What did the researchers look at?

12. A day at the dentist's: In pairs/groups. Look at the list below. Each person chooses to be one of the following. Think of three things that person might do or see during a typical day at the dentist's. (Imagine!) Create a short story about it. Tell it to your partner/group. Try to make it interesting, funny, the experiences, the challenges etc... Students try to interlink student storylines!

1 Dentist	3 Patient
2 Dental receptionist	4 Dentist's chair!

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

13. Let's write! An e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Brushing my teeth**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

14. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) I brush \_\_\_\_\_
- b) I visit \_\_\_\_\_
- c) The toothpaste \_\_\_\_\_
- d) A good dentist \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION

### Student A questions

- 1) What is gingivitis? ( *The answer is on page 8*)
- 2) How do you clean your teeth? Demonstrate.
- 3) How often do you brush your teeth?
- 4) Do you still have your wisdom teeth? If no, explain why not?
- 5) How long do you brush your teeth when you actually brush them?
- 6) What type of toothbrush do you use?
- 7) How often do you change your toothbrush?
- 8) Do you use mouthwash?
- 9) Do you use more than one toothbrush? Why?
- 10) Have you suffered inflammation of the gums?

### Student B questions

- 1) What is the worst dentist story you know?
- 2) When was the last time you visited the dentist?
- 3) How often do you visit the dentist for a checkup?
- 4) How would you describe the state of your teeth?
- 5) How many fillings do you have?
- 6) What type of fillings have you got?
- 7) Have you ever worn a brace?
- 8) How often do you have your teeth cleaned at the dentist's by the hygienist?
- 9) Have you ever had 'Hollywood White'? If yes, when? Why?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

## SPEAKING

### Ten things dentists want you to know

*Allow 10 minutes - Small groups / pairs / 1 to 1*

Look at the ten things below that dentists want you to know. Do you agree with them? Find out from your partner about their experience of these issues? What are your conclusions? (**See p8 links**)

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Dental check ups – and hygienist</li><li>2) Gum disease</li><li>3) Dental cleaning</li><li>4) Brushing twice a day</li><li>5) Bad breath</li><li>6) Proper nutrition for good dental health</li><li>7) Dental problems do not go away without treatment</li><li>8) Root canals</li><li>9) Changing your toothbrush</li><li>10) Maintaining good dental health</li></ol> |
|--|

**The teacher can moderate the session.**

## GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

When was the last time you visited the \_\_\_\_\_? How often do you \_\_\_\_\_ your teeth? If your answer to the latter question is twice a day then this, according to \_\_\_\_\_, is the right answer. People who fail to brush their teeth twice a day are putting themselves at risk of disease, say researchers. A recent study in Scotland of more than 11,000 adults found those with poor oral hygiene had a 70% increased risk of heart disease compared with those who brushed their teeth twice a day. The British Medical Journal study backs previous work showing a link between \_\_\_\_\_ disease and heart problems. But a charity said oral health was just one factor in good \_\_\_\_\_ health. It is known that inflammation in the body, including in the mouth and gums, has an important role in the build up of clogged arteries, which can lead to a heart attack. But this is the first time researchers have looked at whether the frequency of \_\_\_\_\_ brushing has any bearing on the risk of developing heart \_\_\_\_\_. If you don't brush your teeth, your mouth can become infected with bacteria which can cause \_\_\_\_\_.

The survey discovered that overall, 6 out of 10 people said they visited the dentist every 6 months and 7 out of 10 reported brushing their teeth twice a day. Over the 8 year study period there were 555 "cardiovascular events" such as heart attacks, 170 of which were \_\_\_\_\_. Taking into account factors that affect heart disease, such as social class, \_\_\_\_\_, smoking and family history the researchers found those who brushed their teeth twice a day were at a lower risk. Those with poor oral hygiene also tested positive in \_\_\_\_\_ samples for proteins which are suggestive of inflammation. Judy O'Sullivan from the British Heart Foundation: "Good personal \_\_\_\_\_ is a basic element of a healthy lifestyle. But if you want to help your heart, you should eat a balanced \_\_\_\_\_, avoid \_\_\_\_\_ and take part in regular physical activity." Professor Damien Walmsley, scientific advisor to the British Dental Association: "If people brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride \_\_\_\_\_, visit their dentist regularly and restrict sugary snacks to mealtimes; this will go a long way towards keeping the teeth and gums in a \_\_\_\_\_ state for life."

*gum*  
*brush*  
*heart*  
*inflammation*  
*disease*  
*teeth*  
*dentist*  
*dentists*  
*smoking*  
*obesity*  
*hygiene*  
*blood*  
*toothpaste*  
*healthy*  
*fatal*  
*diet*

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

*Listen and fill in the spaces.*

### Brushing teeth halts heart disease

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## GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

When was the last time you visited the dentist? (1)\_\_\_ often do you brush your teeth? If your answer to the latter question is twice a day then this, according to dentists, is (2)\_\_\_ right answer. People who fail to brush their teeth twice a day are putting themselves at risk of disease, say researchers. A recent study in Scotland of more than 11,000 adults found those with poor oral hygiene had a 70% increased risk of heart disease compared with those (3)\_\_\_ brushed their teeth twice a day. The British Medical Journal study backs previous work showing (4)\_\_\_ link between gum disease and heart problems. (5)\_\_\_ a charity said oral health was just one factor in good heart health. It is known that inflammation in the body, including in the mouth (6)\_\_\_ gums, has an important role in the build up of clogged arteries, which can lead to a heart attack. But this is the first time researchers have looked at whether the frequency of teeth brushing has any bearing on the risk of developing heart disease. If (7)\_\_\_ don't brush your teeth, your mouth (8)\_\_\_ become infected with bacteria which can cause inflammation.

**you**

**and**

**can**

**but**

**who**

**the**

**how**

**a**

The survey discovered (1)\_\_\_ overall, 6 out of 10 people said (2)\_\_\_ visited the dentist every 6 months and 7 out of 10 reported brushing their teeth twice a day. Over the 8 year study period there were 555 "cardiovascular events" such as heart attacks, 170 of which were fatal. Taking into account factors that affect heart disease, (3)\_\_\_ social class, obesity, smoking and family history the researchers found (4)\_\_\_ who brushed their teeth twice a day were at a lower risk. Those with poor oral hygiene also tested positive in blood samples for proteins (5)\_\_\_ are suggestive of inflammation. Judy O'Sullivan from the British Heart Foundation: "Good personal hygiene is a basic element of a healthy lifestyle. But if you want to help (6)\_\_\_ heart, you (7)\_\_\_ eat a balanced diet, avoid smoking and take part in regular physical activity." Professor Damien Walmsley, scientific advisor to the British Dental Association: "If people brush (8)\_\_\_ teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, visit their dentist regularly and restrict sugary snacks to mealtimes; this will go a long way towards keeping the teeth and gums in a healthy state for life."

**your**

**which**

**such as**

**their**

**should**

**they**

**those**

**that**

## SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	inflammation	11	researchers
2	whether	12	suggestive
3	frequency	13	themselves
4	bacteria	14	disease
5	obesity	15	hygiene
6	lifestyle	16	fatal
7	cardiovascular	17	diet
8	proteins	18	toothpaste
9	fluoride	19	regularly
10	twice	20	arteries

### LINKS

<http://dentistry.about.com/od/dentalhealth/tp/dentalfacts.htm>

[http://dentistry.about.com/od/dentalhealth/tp/visit\\_dentist.htm](http://dentistry.about.com/od/dentalhealth/tp/visit_dentist.htm)

**From page 4** - What is gingivitis? It is the early stage of gum disease. It can be treated and reversed if diagnosed early. The signs and symptoms are red, swollen and puffy gums that bleed easily.

### ANSWERS

**GAP FILL:** Brushing teeth halts heart disease: When was the last time you visited the **dentist**? How often do you **brush** your teeth? If your answer to the latter question is twice a day then this, according to **dentists**, is the right answer. People who fail to brush their teeth twice a day are putting themselves at risk of disease, say researchers. A recent study in Scotland of more than 11,000 adults found those with poor oral hygiene had a 70% increased risk of heart disease compared with those who brushed their teeth twice a day. The British Medical Journal study backs previous work showing a link between **gum** disease and heart problems. But a charity said oral health was just one factor in good **heart** health. It is known that inflammation in the body, including in the mouth and gums, has an important role in the build up of clogged arteries, which can lead to a heart attack. But this is the first time researchers have looked at whether the frequency of **teeth** brushing has any bearing on the risk of developing heart **disease**. If you don't brush your teeth, your mouth can become infected with bacteria which can cause **inflammation**. The survey discovered that overall, 6 out of 10 people said they visited the dentist every 6 months and 7 out of 10 reported brushing their teeth twice a day. Over the 8 year study period there were 555 "cardiovascular events" such as heart attacks, 170 of which were **fatal**. Taking into account factors that affect heart disease, such as social class, **obesity**, smoking and family history the researchers found those who brushed their teeth twice a day were at a lower risk. Those with poor oral hygiene also tested positive in **blood** samples for proteins which are suggestive of inflammation. Judy O'Sullivan from the British Heart Foundation: "Good personal **hygiene** is a basic element of a healthy lifestyle. But if you want to help your heart, you should eat a balanced **diet**, avoid **smoking** and take part in regular physical activity." Professor Damien Walmsley, scientific advisor to the British Dental Association: "If people brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride **toothpaste**, visit their dentist regularly and restrict sugary snacks to mealtimes; this will go a long way towards keeping the teeth and gums in a **healthy** state for life."

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