

Why Generation Z must embrace gum health

Brussels, 22 April 2024. As Generation Z embarks on their journey into adulthood, there's one crucial aspect of their health that can sometimes be overlooked: their gums. With the rise of sugary diets, and increased stress and anxiety levels, teenagers and young adults are increasingly susceptible to gum disease and other oral problems. This is the topic of Gum Health Day 2024, an annual, global public health campaign led by the EFP (European Federation of Periodontology).

Launched 10 years ago, Gum Health Day aims to inform the general public about the detrimental effects of gum diseases (gingivitis, periodontitis, peri-implant mucositis, and peri-implantitis) on both oral and general health, and the advantages of keeping their gums healthy from a young age.

“We felt that we needed to target Gum Health Day 2024 at young people, as they are not necessarily aware of the role played by their gum health in their overall health, so they may feel less concerned about them,” explains Dr. Mia Rakic, Gum Health Day 2024 co-ordinator.

Gum diseases are associated with major systemic health issues including diabetes, myocardial infarction, heart failure, stroke, chronic kidney disease, adverse pregnancy outcomes, rheumatoid arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, erectile dysfunction, certain forms of cancer, and other systemic diseases. By taking care of our gums, we all can easily start preventing those problems right away – as a healthy smile can pave the way to a healthier lifestyle and save money in the future.

According to a recent white paper published by the Economist Impact called “Time to put your money where your mouth is: addressing inequalities in oral health”, oral diseases impact nearly half the world's population, surpassing the burden of most common non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as mental disorders, cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases.

“This is how we can help Generation Z to recognise the pivotal role their gums play in self-esteem and overall wellbeing. Our campaign aims to inspire young people to lead a positive change in how society views gum health, emphasising its importance beyond oral hygiene, and shed light on the work of periodontists,” Dr. Rakic highlights.

EFP, global benchmark in periodontology

The EFP (European Federation of Periodontology, www.efp.org) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting awareness of periodontal science and the importance of gum health for oral-health professionals and the public. Its guiding vision is “Periodontal health for a better life”.

Founded in 1991, the EFP is a federation of 38 national periodontal societies representing more than 16,000 periodontists, dentists, researchers, and oral-health professionals in Europe and around the world. It organises workshops, events, and campaigns grounded in evidence-based science in periodontal and oral health, including EuroPerio (the world's leading congress in periodontology and implant dentistry), Perio Master Clinic, Gum Health Day, and Perio Workshop.

The EFP's work in education is also highly significant, notably its accredited university-based programmes for postgraduate education in periodontology and implant dentistry.

The EFP has no professional or commercial agenda.