

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gum Health Day 2021 issues reminder that gum diseases may accelerate Covid-19 complications but are preventable

Over 40 countries celebrate Gum Health Day 2021 on 12 May to raise public awareness about how to prevent and detect gingivitis, periodontitis, and peri-implantitis which can affect overall health and are linked to Covid-19 complications

Brussels, 7 May 2021. “Gum diseases are preventable” is the slogan for [Gum Health Day 2021](#), a worldwide awareness initiative held on 12 May that is promoted by the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP). Its goal is to educate the public on how to easily detect and prevent gum diseases — gingivitis, periodontitis, and peri-implantitis — and explain why continuing to visit the dental practice even during the Covid-19 pandemic is important to overall health.

Research has found that gum diseases — as well as causing tooth loss and other problems in the mouth — are linked to major systemic health issues including diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, chronic kidney disease, rheumatoid arthritis, Alzheimer’s disease, certain forms of cancer, pregnancy complications, erectile dysfunction, and even severe Covid-19 outcomes. Recently published scientific papers on the relationship between periodontitis and Covid-19 transmission and complications suggest that establishing and maintaining gum and oral health may become an important part of patient care.

“Gum Health Day 2021 aims to remind people that gum health is a key factor for health and wellbeing even if, unfortunately, it’s still sometimes overlooked,” explains Henrik Dommisch, co-ordinator of Gum Health Day 2021. “Gum diseases that could be effectively prevented and treated still affect hundreds of millions of adults worldwide. It’s time to take decisive action against gum diseases – we can beat them just by keeping a good oral hygiene and going regularly to visit our dentist, periodontist, or hygienist”.

This awareness initiative is celebrated in more than 40 countries in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia, Middle East, and Australasia by EFP-affiliated societies of periodontology and by other scientific societies, dental organisations, hospitals, dental practices, universities, and companies.

Among the Gum Health Day 2021 materials that the EFP has produced is a set of four short animated videos that show how – among other factors – bad breath, sensitive or loose teeth, and smoking can either trigger or be a sign of suffering a gum disease. Most adults in developed countries are affected by gum disease at some point in their lives, even if they are not aware of it because gum diseases are usually painless and often go unnoticed for a time.

Sign the EFP Manifesto, join our Perio Talks

All members of the dental community are invited to join this awareness day by helping disseminate Gum Health Day 2021 messages and materials, particularly on social media, and by signing the EFP Manifesto “Perio & General Health”, which is an international call to dentists and medical professionals to be more proactive in terms of the prevention, early detection, and treatment of gum disease, and to acknowledge it as a major public health issue. Health-related individuals and organisations are invited to sign the EFP Manifesto at efp.org/efp-manifesto/.

Besides activities organised at the national level, the EFP is holding a Gum Health Day 2021 Perio Talks live session at the federation’s Instagram page (@perioeurope) on 12 May at 19.00 CET, open to everybody and led by Henrik Dommisch with representatives from some EFP-affiliated societies. They will exchange ideas and experiences during this Instagram Live session and will answer questions and suggestions from participants about how to educate the population to prevent and tackle the threat posed by gum diseases.

“Gum Health Day 2021 is a major EFP global initiative to get the public informed every year of the value of healthy gums as an integral part of a healthy life,” explains Lior Shapira, president of the EFP. “Prevention of diseases is the best approach to a healthy life, and Gum Health Day 2021 will greatly get closer to our vision of ‘periodontal health for a better life’ for everybody.”

“New associations between gum disease and Covid-19 are now being identified,” Prof Shapira adds. “A new [paper](#)¹, published in the *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, has found that the dental biofilm of symptomatic coronavirus patients can harbour ribonucleic acid (RNA) molecules of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and might act as a potential reservoir with an essential role in the transmission of Covid-19. This reveals a previously unknown and unexplored human habitat of the viral RNA and could open a door to further research in developing Covid-19 containment strategies.”

More information on Gum Health Day 2021 is available at efp.org/gum-health-day/.

EFP, the global benchmark in periodontology

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

Founded in 1991, the EFP is a federation of 37 national periodontal societies that represents more than 16,000 periodontists, dentists, researchers, and oral-health professionals from Europe and around the world. It supports evidence-based science in periodontal and oral health, and it promotes events and campaigns aimed at both professionals and the public.

The EFP organises EuroPerio, the world’s leading congress in periodontology and implant dentistry, as well as other important professional and expert events such as Perio Master Clinic and Perio Workshop.

¹ [‘Dental biofilm of symptomatic Covid-19 patients harbours SARS-CoV-2’ by Sabrina Carvalho Gomes, Sabrina Fachin, Juliane Gonçalves da Fonseca, Patrícia Daniela Melchioris Angst, Marcelo Lazzaron Lamers, Ilma Simoni Brum da Silva, and Luciana Neves Nunes. Journal of Clinical Periodontology, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpe.13471>. Free-access article available at <https://bit.ly/3epFuXc>](#)

The EFP also organises workshops and outreach campaigns with its partners: projects to date have covered the relationship between periodontal disease and diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and caries, as well as women's oral health during pregnancy.

The EFP's *Journal of Clinical Periodontology* is the most authoritative scientific publication in this field. The federation also publishes *JCP Digest*, a summary of research which is published monthly in seven languages, and the *Perio Insight* and *Perio Life* magazines, which respectively offer expert views on issues in clinical practice and give voice to alumni of the EFP-accredited postgraduate programmes in periodontology. Online, the EFP has developed its EFP Virtual strategy for continuing education, which includes the Perio Sessions webinars, the EuroPerio Series presentations, and the Perio Talks interactive chats on social media.

The EFP's work in education is also highly significant, notably its accreditation programme for postgraduate education in periodontology and implant dentistry.

The EFP has no professional or commercial agenda.

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