

## *Vitamin C & Optimal Oral Health*

*by John F. Davis, DDS, Visiting Faculty*

Vitamin C is essential to the formation of collagen which is the most abundant fiber contained in the connective tissues of the human body including bones, blood vessels, gingiva (gums) and skin. Healthy connective tissue serves as a "first line of defense" against bacteria invasion of our bodies.

Sufficient vitamin C is a consideration in oral health because the amounts of visible plaque (a continuously forming thin film of bacteria adhering to tooth surfaces) and decayed tooth surfaces are higher in individuals with low vitamin C.

Research also has identified vitamin C as a stimulant to the immune sys-

tem, helping to ward off the effects of bacterial infection seen with periodontal (gum) disease.

Its importance to our overall health has been demonstrated by its role in collagen formation, the immune system and as an antioxidant.

Because vitamin C is water soluble, it is rapidly eliminated from the body and needs to be replenished every day. Recommended daily allowances for vitamin C are 75 milligrams per day for women, 90 milligrams per day for men and 120 milligrams per day for smokers. Many elderly, alcohol consumers, and athletes require higher doses of vitamin C.

Dentists frequently advise their

patients with periodontal disease to take 500mg of chewable Vitamin C twice a day to improve periodontal health. Some authorities feel a time-release capsule is best, while others feel a powdered form is desirable.

If a person eats at least five fruits and vegetables each day, then it is possible that upwards of 500mg might be consumed. The following are just a few sources of vitamin C:

Red pepper (4 oz)	220mg
Green pepper (4 oz)	110mg
Fresh orange juice (8 oz)	125mg
Broccoli-chopped (1 cup)	85mg
Grapefruit juice (1 cup)	85mg
Orange (5 oz)	70mg
Cauliflower (1 cup)	55mg
Grapefruit (5 oz)	45mg.

## *"Soda Mouth"...a mother's lament*

*by Deborah E. Bush, Editor*

"Coke," "Pop," "Soda," or whatever you call carbonated sugar beverages, they have harmed the teeth of many a youth. In August my 24-year-old son had a rude awakening. A routine teeth cleaning and checkup with an on-the-ball dental team turned into a discovery session that he will not easily forget. He was handed the mirror and invited to look around at the surfaces of his teeth. His gums were probed and bled.

What has this young man been doing since he left home for college and the wide, wide world? Well, for

one, he got into the habit of starting his day with a cola and finishing the day in similar fashion burning the proverbial midnight oil. Apparently, this habit is not uncommon in his age group. For many, the beverage of choice is Mountain Dew – its caffeine content is higher. He reports that among his peers, 4 to 6 cans a day are the norm.

Once fluoride became common in drinking water, dentists thought they would see a big drop in tooth decay but at the current rate of soda consumption ... I wonder.

John returned to the dentist the

next day for 5 composite fillings (and paid for them out of his own pocket). He promptly purchased a top of the line sonic toothbrush, several replacement heads, fluoride mouth rinse, and an assortment of flossing paraphernalia. Leaving no stone unturned, he kicked his soda habit!

He's coming home for the holidays ostensibly to see me but I suspect what's really on his mind is checking in for a thorough teeth cleaning and a chat with his dentist. His plane arrives at 6:30 PM and he's scheduled himself to be in the hygienist's chair at 8:00 AM the very next morning. I realize now that a mother's prayers *do* get answered. □