

Teeth, and how to care for them.

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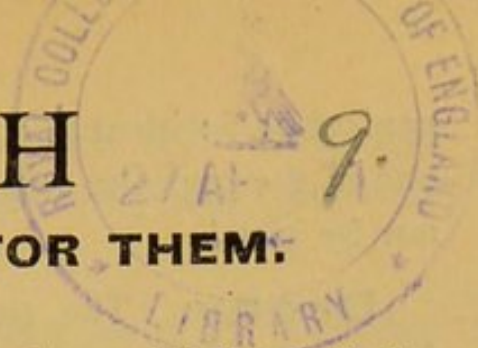


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Hewin (Dr. Octava)

TEETH

AND HOW TO CARE FOR THEM.



A GOOD set of teeth is necessary for the well-being of the individual, and a perfect set is one of the best **ornaments** that one can possess.

To keep them in order is therefore highly important, and knowledge and care are requisite.

There are 20 temporary or milk teeth. They begin to be cut when the child is about six months old and should be all through soon after it is two years old. The first permanent tooth comes through about the sixth year, behind the last milk tooth. After that the second set gradually replaces the milk teeth. The two large back molars appear at about 12 and 18 respectively. The milk teeth usually get loose as the new ones are ready to be cut, the roots get absorbed and disappear, and the tooth falls out. Sometimes the milk tooth gets pushed to one side by the new tooth and falls over while still remaining attached, and then the root instead of getting absorbed sticks into the sides of the mouth and forms ulcers. Biting is painful and the food is not properly masticated. The mouth gets sore and unhealthy and quite unfit to receive the new set.

POSITION OF TEETH.

The teeth are kept in the upright position by the action of muscles. The muscles of the cheeks and lips prevent them from being pressed out by the tongue. If the lips are not kept closed as a habit the front teeth will gradually spread, and as years go by they will stick straight out so that they cannot bite against the opposite ones and it becomes impossible to shut the mouth, and the teeth get long and loose and useless.

The lips are also necessary to prevent dust and dirt being blown into the mouth and settling on the teeth.

The teeth are kept firmly embedded in their sockets by the pressure of the opposing ones. If this pressure is missing they get loose in time and fall out. If a tooth is lost from

neglect or accident it may be wise to remove the corresponding one in the opposite jaw, if for any reason an artificial one cannot be put in.

Decay. The teeth should be watched and examined frequently lest **one** should begin to decay. This is all important from the first, but especially from the sixth year, when the first permanent one comes through. Should decay occur it must be treated at once; if neglected the following results, among others, may occur:—

1. **Toothache.** This should never occur, but when it does it is not merely a local trouble in a tooth. It causes considerable constitutional and nervous disturbance. The digestion is upset and the ordinary work or lessons cannot be done properly.

2. **Gumboil.** This is a small superficial abscess on the gum caused by infection from poison in a decayed tooth.

3. **Abscess of the jaw.** If the poison cannot work its way out through the gum, it may burrow down over the jaw bone and form a large abscess on the face. When this heals, which may not be for many months, or just so long as it is neglected, a permanent scar and deformity result.

4. **Necrosis of the jaw.** If the matter cannot escape outwards, the jaw bone itself may get diseased and part of it may die, and then there must follow an operation.

5. **Enlarged glands.** The poison may go down into the neck glands and make them large and tender, and abscesses may form in them.

6. **Offensive breath** is a common result of a neglected mouth. Many people find it difficult to get employment if they suffer in this way.

Dirty teeth. The mouth may be likened to an un-aired damp cupboard, where no one would dream of storing eatables.

If particles of food are left in the mouth they go bad as food will do if left in a warm moist place. The putrid food not only leads to decay in the teeth themselves but it is always

being washed down into the stomach with the saliva, and gradually the whole system may get poisoned and the body stunted, ill-favored and anæmic.

Tartar. This is a hard substance which is deposited on dirty teeth in much the same way as fur deposits on the inside of a kettle. It must be removed as soon as it is seen, otherwise it will go on accumulating and the gums become red, inflamed and ulcerated till they get destroyed under the pressure. Some mouths deposit tartar very quickly.

TO PRESERVE THE TEETH.

As the teeth are so placed as to be invisible to the owner, a looking glass must always be used when they are cleaned. It is difficult to do good work in the dark.

The teeth are a little narrower at the level of the gum than at the biting edge. There are thus little triangles between adjacent teeth. Care must be taken to keep these free from old food, and so the tooth brush should be used mostly up and down so that the bristles can work in between the teeth. The inner side of the teeth as well as the outer must be brushed regularly. Toothpicks are often necessary, but only to be used in private.

The teeth should be brushed frequently—and always at night after the last food has been taken.

Soft foods are bad for the teeth. They need hard substances which require mastication to keep them in good order.

Brushing with plain water will usually be sufficient. If, however, this does not clean properly, as does occur in some cases, a small amount of pumice powder may be used occasionally as required.

It is better not to use any medicated or antiseptic or scented tooth preparations except under very special expert advice, as some is bound to escape and be swallowed. It is dangerous to be continually swallowing even small quantities of drugs.

The brush should be dried after using. This keeps the bristles crisp and makes it last longer.

TENDER TEETH.

Sometimes a tooth gets tender even when it is quite sound. This occurs when it is not used, as when the opposing one is damaged or lost, or when only soft foods are taken, the tissues beneath the tooth will begin to swell, and it will become tender when pressed upon, and soon get loose.

If soft foods are still used the tooth goes from bad to worse, but it can soon be cured by biting on hard crusts or toast. The tenderness passes off and the tooth gets sound and firm again.

Soft foods must only be exclusively used in illness and by the special order of the doctor, and then greater care than ever must be taken to keep the teeth in good condition.

RULES.

1. Clean frequently with water and brush the front, back and sides of the teeth.
2. Watch carefully and see that they grow properly.
3. If decay occur have it attended to promptly.
4. Eat hard food that requires chewing. It is better than soft food.

