



# Ask the Dentist

*Got a question for a dentist?*

If you have a question you would like answered by a Ministry of Health-approved dentist, send it to us at [enquiries.anjar@gmail.com](mailto:enquiries.anjar@gmail.com). This issue, your questions are answered by orthodontist, implantologist, oral surgeon, aesthetics and laser dentist at Imperial Dental Specialist Centre, **Dato' Dr. How Kim Chuan** and aesthetic laser dentist, **Dr. Arlena Lee**.

## NOT SO SWEET SPOT

**My brother-in-law has just been diagnosed with diabetes. He's always had a sweet tooth. He is now obese. Now that he is watching his diet and cutting out sugar from his meals, how should he care for his teeth? Are there any dental problems associated with obesity and diabetes? I've done a bit of reading and diabetes impairs the body's ability to fight infections. If this is true, is he more susceptible to periodontitis and how can he reduce such problems from happening?**

Diabetes has been known to be the second to smoking in causing periodontal disease. Medical illness such as diabetes and obesity requires dietary as well as lifestyle modifications in order to have optimum results. The main dental concern would be periodontal disease as well as caries. The side effect of medications is often associated with dry mouth, which is associated to a high incidence of caries due to the reduction of salivary flow, amongst other things. Diabetes and periodontitis is related to reduced immune function rendering the patient susceptible to infection. Patients should always aim to prevent periodontitis rather than treating it. This starts with reducing the consumption of food high in refined sugar, and the use of artificial sweeteners such as aspartame as an alternative. Habits such as smoking should be stopped, as it has deteriorative effects to oral health. Oral hygiene should be optimised by proper tooth brushing, the use of a fluoridated toothpaste, flossing and mouth-rinsing. Last but not least, a quarterly dental check up would be advised to ensure early detection of decay as well as periodontitis.

## WHAT A KNOCK OUT!

**My son got his tooth accidentally knocked out at ten o'clock at night last month. Because it was so late and no dental clinics were open, was in pain throughout the night. What should I do the next my child has a dental emergency? How do I handle the situation if a dentist isn't available?**

In cases of dental emergencies and the absence of any medical attention, it is important that a caregiver or parents learn how to manage these situations. First and foremost, it is crucial to identify whether the tooth which was knocked out is accounted for. It is crucial that caregivers know that there is a risk that the child could be choking on the broken tooth. In the event that that the whole tooth has come out, it is advised to soak the tooth in solutions such as milk or saline water. This can later be brought in to the dentist's office for reattachment. In the event that the tooth is not found, it is crucial to establish that the child does not have difficulty in breathing or choking. Once it is established, the caregiver should proceed to stop the bleeding by applying firm pressure or having the child bite on a clean handkerchief or clean cotton for 10-15 minute. However, should the bleeding not stop after this, it is advisable that parents bring their child to the nearest hospital to seek medical attention immediately. Should the child be in pain, it is advisable to seek the prescription of painkillers to relieve the pain. On the next day, it is advisable to seek immediate dental attention to ensure that the injuries are attended to.

