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GRIN and BEAR IT

WHAT'S BEHIND THAT SMILE IS CLOSER TO THE HEART

If your eyes are windows to the soul, then your mouth could be the closed-circuit camera to everything else. The reason? The virtual universe of micro-organisms that thrives in this warm, moist environment. When your immunity is compromised by stress or illness, some of these micro-organisms multiply to feast on gum tissue, teeth and bone, and course through the bloodstream and airways to attack your sense of smell and taste, lungs, heart, even your fetus during pregnancy. Others, however, are beneficial, maintaining the pH balance of your mouth and fighting off aggressive bacteria. "Generally, we are friends with our bacteria," says Toronto research scientist and dental hygienist Anne Bosy. "But if you have a crowded city that's out of control, you'll have too much waste, smell, crime and a proliferation of the bad guys."

Which is why Bosy has spent years developing a revolutionary system for dentists that may transform our concept of a healthy mouth and body. Dubbed OraFresh, Bosy's biotic protocol enables dentists to diagnose exactly which "bad guys" are at work in the pockets of gum tissue surrounding your teeth, and target them using antimicrobial gels and rinses that, unlike penicillin or an antiseptic mouthwash, kill only the perpetrators.

Currently, Bosy's OraFresh system is available only in a handful of clinics in Ontario and Alberta.

WANT STRONGER TEETH?

CHEW ON THIS... Your teeth weaken with age and whitening treatments, but here's fresh help. Think of it as an enamel-hardening, crevice-filling mineral supplement just for teeth. Recaldent, a calcium derivative now in Trident's Xtra Care gum, fights daily mineral loss in tooth enamel caused by plaque acids. The calcium-bonding effect, however, lasts only three hours, so keep a piece around for after meals or a bleaching treatment.

BONE DRY



MANY OF US DON'T GET ENOUGH PROTEIN, AND ONE SCIENTIST BELIEVES WE COULD BE FEELING IT IN OUR BONES

We thought our skeletal salvation was more or less assured. As long as we prayed occasionally at the altar of chalky calcium chews and communed on supplements as throat-friendly as golf balls, we'd inch closer to the daily recommended 1,000 to 1,500 milligrams of calcium and 1,000 IUs of vitamin D. Yet, despite our intentions, most of us still fall short in these bone stalwarts, exposing one in four Canadian women to osteoporosis.

Worse still, our bodies may be absorbing even less calcium if we're low in another important nutrient: protein.

Jane Kerstetter assumes the hard-nosed insistence of a kindergarten teacher when it comes to the golden rule of bone health. After 15 years in nutritional research at Yale and the

University of Connecticut, specializing in protein, Kerstetter has discovered this macronutrient actually helps regulate the body's absorption of calcium. "Most of the science shows protein may slow bone loss," she says.

Two years ago, Kerstetter, along with a team of doctors and dietitians, launched a four-year trial to measure the impact of a protein supplement on the bone density of hundreds of post-menopausal women, and some men.

Until the study wraps up, though, Kerstetter pleads with women to get their daily recommended calcium and vitamin D. "If you're getting a lot, it's hard for anything else, such as the leaching effects of sodium, caffeine and alcohol, to hurt your bones. The problem is, most people don't."