

THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF POOR

DENTAL

NEW RESEARCH SHOWS THAT POOR DENTAL HYGIENE CAN HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE REST OF YOUR BODY AND CONTRIBUTE TO OTHER TYPES OF DISEASES.

HYGIENE

DATA CLEARLY SHOWS THERE IS A DEFINITE RISK OF BOTH OPERATIONAL DISRUPTION AND DISCOMFORT TO SEAFARERS. WHAT CAN BEEN DONE TO MITIGATE THESE RISKS?

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THE MOST COMMON DENTAL ISSUES

MedSea receives daily enquiries about various types of dental case, including:

CARIES

Bacterial damage to the tooth, which may require a filling (if it becomes a cavity)

DISPLACED FILLINGS

Caused by biting hard food or further tooth decay

TOOTHACHE

Inflammation or infection of the soft tissue inside the tooth that contains nerves and blood vessels

PERIODONTAL DISEASE

Inflammation and infection of the gums and the supporting structures of the teeth, which can lead to tooth loss and other complications

FRAGMENTED TEETH

From sudden blows/accidents, grinding or clenching teeth

MANAGEMENT OF DENTAL CASES ON BOARD

Dental cases are not always easy to manage on board, and over 50% of MedSea's dental cases require further shoreside evaluation (higher than average, compared to other case types). Adding to this challenge is the limited knowledge on board about how to handle dental issues, as it is often not covered as part of first aid training courses.

When crew members cannot be immediately attended to by a dentist onshore, the pain and discomfort may affect their performance, concentration, sleep, and safety. Given the clear risks, the focus must be on mitigating and preventing these issues. It is extremely important not only for crew members to take good care of their teeth before joining the vessel, but also to continue practising good oral hygiene throughout their time at sea.

IN 2023, DENTAL CASES MOVED FROM MEDSEA'S SIXTH MOST COMMON CASE TO SECOND.

This shift is not surprising, given that oral diseases afflict 50% of the world's population, costing \$387 billion per year in direct costs (dental visits) to the world economy.

DENTAL CASES ARE ON THE RISE AMONG SEAFARERS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREW MEMBERS

Dental X-rays within your Pre-Employment Medical Examination: can detect any tooth defects not visible on inspection and help you manage any underlying dental issues early on.

ENSURE GOOD DENTAL HYGIENE

Teeth should be brushed properly for approximately two minutes, at least twice a day, using a soft-bristled or powered toothbrush and a fluoride toothpaste. Flossing and use of dental mouthwash is also recommended.

ENSURE YOUR DIET IS RICH IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Avoid or limit the consumption of sugary, acidic, or caffeinated drinks and aim to consume at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO STOP SMOKING IF YOU CAN

Aside from the obvious health benefits, stopping smoking can reduce the risk of gum disease and tooth decay.

IF YOU HAVE DENTAL PAIN ON BOARD

seek medical advice and treatment as soon as possible: to reduce the potential for any complications and unplanned disembarkations.

CHANGE YOUR TOOTHBRUSH EVERY 3 TO 4 MONTHS

or when the bristles begin to fray, to optimise effective cleaning.

TO FIND OUT MORE

about how MedSea, an International SOS Company, can help support the health of your seafarers, visit: www.internationalsos.com/sectors/maritime

