



# Our Mouth is, First and Foremost, the Means by Which We Take in Our Nutrients & *Where Digestion Begins*

Dr. Dana Colson

positive energy, an unattractive smile holds us back. When we don't like the aesthetics of our mouth, it is more difficult to speak our truths, to be authentic and to embrace the world.

Our response to aesthetics seems to be hardwired. We know that babies respond to faces that are more attractive. Good-looking men and women get better and more prestigious jobs. A 2004 study by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry shows that 99 percent of those surveyed believe that an attractive smile is an important social asset, while 96 percent believe that an attractive smile makes a person more appealing to the opposite sex. Meanwhile, 74 percent feel a bad smile can ruin your chances of career success.

## Teeth in Times Past

We have always viewed our teeth as something more than just tools for chewing and shredding food. Long before whitening strips, braces and porcelain veneers, primitive people sought to enhance their appearance with beautiful teeth. The Mayans filled their teeth with colourful inlays of jade and gold. Young girls in the Ticuna tribe of Brazil traditionally filed their teeth into sharp points as a mark of beauty. On the other side of the world, Hindus in Bali file their teeth to symbolically remove aggressive behavior and mark the passage from puberty to adulthood in a ceremony that takes place prior to their wedding day.

Even cavemen were obsessed with preserving their teeth. In 2001, archaeologists digging at the Neolithic gravesite in Pakistan estimated to be between 7,000 and

**O**ur mouth is, first and foremost, the means by which we take in our nutrients and where digestion begins. It plays a social and sexual role. Kissing is a means of expression. The mouth also plays a primary role in the way we communicate. Our voice, for example, is produced in the throat, while the tongue, lips and teeth and jaws are all needed to produce the range of sounds that make up our speech.

You might even say that our words determine our destiny. According to psychologists, optimistic words lead to happiness - both for the person who is thinking and speaking positively, and for the listener. This contributes to the success of our relationships, our work lives and even our company's bottom line.

Our mouth is a part of how we make the sounds of laughter and, of course, how we smile. Our smile plays a major role in how we perceive ourselves and others. Just as a radiant smile opens the world up to us and reflects

9,000 years old, uncovered evidence of humankind's earliest dentistry. They found half a dozen molars that had been drilled with flint heads, revealing a complex procedure in which the tooth's cavity wall was carved out to remove decay. Researchers believe that these early dentists were probably the tribe's bead workers, whose skills also proved useful in fixing teeth.

Early in their history even the ancient Greeks hadn't achieved this degree of sophistication. They initially believed that tooth decay was caused by spirits. They sought cures for toothaches and decay through magic and prayer. Not until the arrival of Hippocrates (BC 460-376), the father of modern medicine, were those notions dispelled. Hippocrates sought scientific evidence and set out to separate medicine from religion. He posited that disease wasn't a punishment inflicted by the gods, but the product of diet and lifestyle.

In his journals, Hippocrates wrote extensively about problems with teeth and gums, raising possible connections between what happened in the oral cavity and the rest of the body. He believed that tooth decay was caused by the corrosive action of food, in addition to individual predisposition. He also invented a number of dental instruments, including forceps for extractions, and advocated cleaning the teeth with wooden sticks and wool moistened with honey.

Based on Hippocrates' early work, the glory of Rome was said to be reflected in the mouths of its most prominent citizens. Clean teeth were so valued by affluent families that they had their slaves clean their mouths daily. Poets and writers of the time also celebrated teeth as a fundamental aspect of a woman's beauty and an orator's diction.

An aspect that is valued more than ever. Today's media and our standard for a great quality of life celebrates a beautiful smile. Science and technology allow this to happen. We are very fortunate to have the ability to make changes. Creating great smiles can be pivotal in transforming lives! **DT**



**Dr. Dana Colson** practices wellness-based dentistry in midtown Toronto. Throughout her career Dana has committed to extensive continuing education. Dana has studied Acupuncture, Nutrition, Craniosacral Therapy and Homeopathy. Dana has also taken courses in active listening and NLP. Dana holds accreditation in IAOMT, achieved FAGD, and is a member in several professional organizations, including the ODA/CDA, AACD and HAPA. She is also a graduate of both the Pankey Institute in Florida and the Kois Curriculum in Seattle. Dr. Colson has recently authored the book *Your Mouth: The Gateway to a Healthier You*. Dana has lectured extensively in Canada and internationally on general, laser and cosmetic dentistry, integrating her unique wellness based approach.

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