

PD Essentials

Your guide to the latest news and views

BDA announces next president



Nairn Wilson, professor of dentistry and the current president of King's College London Association, has been announced as president-elect of the British Dental Association (BDA).

The election comes hot on the heels of Nairn's latest award – the 2013 Dentistry Lifetime Contribution Award.

He was formerly professor of restorative dentistry and dean and head of King's College London Dental Institute between 2001 and 2012, and deputy vice principal (health) at King's between 2009 and 2012.

Commenting on his election, Nairn said: 'I am delighted to have been elected president-elect of the BDA. I hope, amongst other activities, to do more to enhance the image of dentistry, promote further improvements in oral health and increase awareness of the importance of oral health to general health and wellbeing.'

Nairn, who is immediate past president of the metropolitan branch of the BDA and a long-standing member of the association's health and science committee, will be the 139th president when he takes up office in May 2015. He intends to remain active in various aspects of academic dentistry, in particular editing and publishing, and to continue in his other roles, including registrar of the UK Public Health Register.

Hot off the press!

Professor Andrew Eder considers some of the potential contributing factors for tooth wear and the importance of giving preventive advice

When we talk about the effect of diet on oral health, the main culprits we single out are carbonated soft drinks packed with sugar – but remember that even carbonated water can cause enamel loss.

This is because the addition of carbon dioxide, which forms carbonic acid, lowers the pH of the water, rendering it more damaging than still water.

Interestingly, however, research shows that the mineral composition in carbonated mineral water can reduce the dissolution of enamel. Calcium has the most positive effect, but in combination with magnesium and sulphate, the beneficial results are limited. In comparison with more erosive drinks, such as fruit juice, fruit-based carbonated drinks and still and sparkling soft drinks, sparkling water can be considered less erosive, and sparkling mineral water even less still.

Sage advice

When giving advice about frequency of sugar consumption to prevent decay, ensure it is in line with *Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention*.

In your guidance, include a suggestion that patients limit exposure to acidic foods and drinks to four times a day, as research shows that just four exposures to acid can cause tooth wear, too.

Keep abreast of healthy alternatives to decay and tooth wear-causing food and drink to ensure your advice is holistic, considering patients' systemic health as well as their oral health.

Plain coconut water is one such alternative beverage. While it is not yet incorporated into much research, its relatively high pH makes it tooth-friendly and a good alternative when patients are finding it difficult to reduce soft and/or sparkling drinks. It is natural and has many benefits, including high electrolyte levels, nil fat and cholesterol.

Cacao powder is a healthy alternative to conventional, processed cocoa powder and perfect for home baking. A precious resource in South America for thousands of years, cacao is full of antioxidants, magnesium and iron, and free from sugar. It can be mixed with ingredients such as nuts, coconut butter and stevia or xylitol to sweeten to make delicious, nutritious and tooth-friendly treats.

Better than cure

Evidence is emerging that indicates toothpaste with added protein shows promise when it comes to preventing erosion.

In the future we may see more research in this area, in line with increased awareness of tooth wear and its growing prevalence – and perhaps development of a toothpaste with added specialised features for patients with tooth wear. **PD**

Professor Andrew Eder is a specialist in restorative dentistry and prosthodontics. He is clinical director of the specialist referral practice, London Tooth Wear Centre (www.toothwear.co.uk).