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GUEST ARTICLE: UNITED CONCORDIA DENTAL

UNITED CONCORDIA[®] DENTAL

Protect Your Mouth From the Cold!

During winter, we're all likely to bundle up in our warm sweaters and coats, but remembering to protect your mouth is just as important! When it's cold and dry outside, common oral health problems can worsen. Taking some easy precautions can protect your lips and teeth and keep your whole mouth healthy. Here are some common winter oral health issues and some tips to help¹:

- **Dry lips:** We all get dreaded chapped lips at some time during the winter, and lip balm with SPF can protect, and help heal, the delicate skin on your lips. Drinking water is a great way to keep your skin hydrated, with the added benefit of alleviating dry mouth (see article below) symptoms. Using a humidifier in your home can add extra moisture to the air.
- **Dry mouth:** When your mouth produces an insufficient amount of saliva, things get dry in there! Reduced saliva production increases the risk of cavities and other oral health problems. Certain types of medication or treatments can cause this, and the best prevention and treatment is to drink LOTS of water. Sucking on sugar-free candies or chewing sugar-gum, using a humidifier, or over-the-counter saliva substitutes also can help dry mouth.
- **Sensitive teeth:** If sipping hot cocoa or a taking a big breath of cold outside air causes sharp pain in your teeth, you could be experiencing sensitivity. What causes this? There's a layer of sensitive tissue called dentin just underneath the hard enamel of your teeth. When the protective enamel is worn away or eroded, your dentin is exposed. So anything hot or cold that touches your teeth can cause pain. Using a fluoride toothpaste for sensitive teeth daily can help protect exposed dentin.
- **TMJ Disorder:** Those with the condition can experience jaw, face, head, and neck pain. Grinding and clenching often is the cause. Your dentist can recommend treatments such as wearing a night guard, relaxation techniques, or medication. To minimize tension of the jaw in the cold weather, try to stay warm! Keep toasty with a sweater, scarf, and hat when you go outside.

Sources:

1. colgate.com; Winter tips for a healthy mouth: Dealing with common winter mouth woes; accessed December 2021.

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