



WHY IS MY DENTAL HYGIENIST ASKING ABOUT MY CANNABIS USE?

This information sheet has been produced by the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario to help dental hygiene clients understand why dental hygienists are asking the following questions about cannabis use.

Do you use cannabis for recreational or medicinal purposes?

Regular cannabis use can lead to higher incidence of cavities, gum disease, oral cancer, gingivitis and periodontal disease. Your dental hygienist can help you understand the risks of cannabis use while she/he regularly monitors your oral health for any unplanned consequences.

If medicinal, what is the medical condition that cannabis is being used for?

Many medical conditions and medications taken to manage them can have an impact on the health of your mouth, teeth and gums. It is important for your dental hygienist to know all your medical conditions and any medications you may be taking in order to provide safe and effective recommendations and treatments. The more your dental hygienist knows about your personal health history, the more customized your dental hygiene care can be.



How do you consume cannabis?

There are four different methods in which cannabis can be consumed. Each method of consumption has a different effect on your oral and general health. For example, smoking is associated with an increased risk of oral cancer. Your dental hygienist will perform an oral cancer screening to monitor and assess any potential risks and will design a homecare program to help prevent other oral side effects of use.



When was the last time you used cannabis?

It is important to inform your dental hygienist if you have recently consumed cannabis. Some medications such as “freezing”, that dental hygienists and dentists use during your treatment, can cause a possible drug interaction leading to a potentially life threatening medical emergency if you have recently consumed cannabis.

How frequently do you use cannabis?

Long-term cannabis use can lead to higher incidence of cavities, gum disease, oral cancer, gingivitis and periodontal disease and can increase your risk of heart disease. Monitoring your teeth, gums and mouth and vitals such as your blood pressure is part of an assessment performed by your dental hygienist in order to help safeguard against these potential risks.

