

YOU SHOULD KNOW:

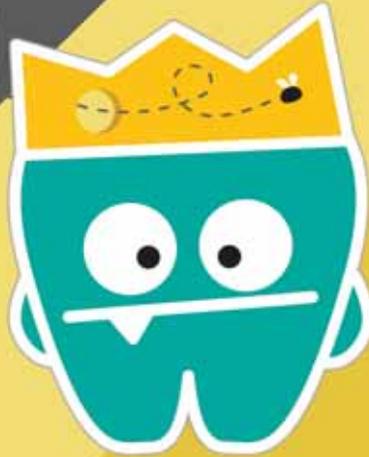
MOUTH MONSTERS

by Chelsea Knorr, Editor, *Dentaltown Magazine*

Dentaltown Magazine spoke with Dr. Warren A. Brill, past president of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), to learn more about the Monster-Free Mouths Movement, a new educational campaign that addresses the nationwide threat to children's oral health. Here we meet Tartar the Terrible, Tooth D.K. and Ginger Bite-Us.



**TARTAR
THE
TERRIBLE**



**TOOTH
D.K.**



**GINGER
BITE-US**

Image courtesy of the
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

What are the Mouth Monsters?

Brill: In late January, the AAPD announced its first-ever “State of Little Teeth Report,” which underscored the significant threat that tooth decay has to the health, welfare and future of children in the U.S. And while studies show that delaying the first dental exam until the age of two or three can have an adverse impact on a child’s oral health. The “State of Little Teeth Report” reveals that 40 percent of parents and caregivers surveyed wait to take their child to the dentist until after age two. To address this nation-wide threat to children’s health, the AAPD launched the Monster-Free Mouths Movement, an educational campaign to arm parents and caregivers with important tools and information to help fight tooth decay, also known as the Mouth Monsters.

How do these monsters tie into AAPD and to MyChildrensTeeth.org?

Brill: Parents and caregivers can go to MyChildrensTeeth.org to find tips and tools to teach their children about their teeth in a fun way, including the whimsical Mouth Monsters characters—Tartar the Terrible, Tooth D.K. and Ginger Bite-Us. The site also provides educational resources and guidance geared to help parents and caregivers better understand the importance of children’s oral health, as well as a pediatric dentist finder tool to locate a nearby primary dental care provider for their child.

Where did this idea come from?

Brill: This idea resonated from Weber Shandwick, our new public relations firm. In collaboration with them, we announced an exciting new rebranding campaign that accentuates the importance of pediatric dentistry and distinguishes our members as the experts on children’s oral health. The new brand identity was the start of a consumer-focused effort to include a broad awareness campaign that kicked off on January 28, 2014.

You are in an elevator. A man asks what your organization does. You have 15 seconds before the door opens. What do you say?

Brill: The AAPD is a not-for-profit professional membership association of 9,300 representing the specialty of pediatric dentistry. Our members provide primary care and comprehensive dental specialty treatments for infants, children, adolescents and individuals with special health-care needs. We educate

and inform policymakers, parents and guardians, and other health-care professionals, and provide continuing professional education for pediatric dentists and general dentists who treat children.

What is the philosophy surrounding MyChildrensTeeth.org?

Brill: A comprehensive resource for parents and caregivers, MyChildrensTeeth.org gathers together all of the AAPD’s articles and information that are useful to the general public in one convenient place. The AAPD launched the new site in order to meet the growing need for high quality, evidence-based dental information that gives the most up-to-date information on children’s oral health directly to consumers. This site informs parents and caregivers and empowers them to start making informed choices for their children as soon as possible, all driven by the best dental science and practices available.

How can a practice integrate Mouth Monsters or tell their patients about them?

Brill: With the help of the AAPD, your practice and the lay public can join the Monster-Free Mouths Movement and keep your child’s mouth free of creatures like Ginger Bite-Us, Tartar the Terrible and Tooth D.K. Tooth decay is the number one chronic infectious disease among children in the U.S., so learn more about this terrifying trio and find out how to banish your child’s mouth monsters for good at www.mychildrensteeth.org/mouth_monsters/.

Help your kids keep the monsters out of their mouths with our handy posters, fact sheets and other fun stuff. To download the complete Mouth Monster Defense Kit, please visit: www.mychildrensteeth.org/assets/2/7/AAPD_MouthMonsters_CompleteKit.pdf.

What is your advice to parents dealing with uncooperative children when it comes to tooth brushing?

Brill: Parents should make tooth brushing and flossing a routine part of their day, helping their children in the morning and evening. For those children who may not be as cooperative as they would like, devise games and reward systems that the children will enjoy. Also, if they have a favorite television or cartoon character, use a toothbrush with that character on the handle and tell the children that the character is helping get their teeth clean and healthy. ■

YOU SHOULD KNOW: GUMCHUCKS

by Chelsea Knorr, Editor, *Dentaltown Magazine*

Dentaltown Magazine spoke with OralWise, Inc., president Keith Allen and general manager Brix Gatti to learn about GumChucks, a revolutionary flossing system that has managed to put fun and ease in to flossing. You heard us right: Flossing. Fun. Easy. Read on to learn how GumChucks makes this possible.



What is your background?

Allen: I do not come from the dental industry. I think my perspective as an accomplished media producer and entertainment executive with extensive branding experience lends itself to the unique and effective nature of GumChucks.

Gatti: I am a loud and proud dental hygienist, as well as the general manager of GumChucks. My passion for oral health led me to GumChucks, where I have been able to help bridge the gap between the more serious (and often boring) dental industry and GumChucks, a product that has ignited excitement and passion for oral health among dental professionals and consumers alike.

Tell us about GumChucks.

Gatti: GumChucks is a revolutionary flossing system that has managed to truly put the fun and ease in to flossing. GumChucks features two BPA-free handles representing miniature nunchucks, which are connected by a piece of disposable floss. The ability to maneuver the handles creates easier access to posterior regions of the mouth, ideal leverage, and most importantly, the ability to create the perfect “C-shape” with the floss. To top it off, when you are ready to dispose of the floss tip, simply press the button on either end of the GumChucks handles and shoot the tips into the trashcan.

What began initially as a product for kids quickly crossed over as the optimal flossing device for everyone! Since then, GumChucks have been made available in a multitude of forms: ProFloss for adults, ORTHOGami for braces (ortho flossing in under two minutes without the use of threading!), and ProTech, the autoclavable version for chairside use with patients.

Where did this idea come from?

Allen: GumChucks was born in May 2010, when Jeromi Stewart and myself met during a business convention. After a lunch meeting, Jeromi had something caught between his teeth and reached into his bag to pull out a homemade flossing device—two plastic handles connected by a single piece of dental floss. Jeromi’s unique invention, intended for his own personal flossing needs, was a stripped down, a rudimentary version of what GumChucks are today;

they looked like miniature nunchucks. He wanted to avoid putting his hands in his mouth, maintain leverage and tension, and make flossing easy. His nunchuck-like tool accomplished this.

A couple of weeks later as a fluke, I told my father about Jeromi’s flossing device. My father, who was not a regular flosser, thought he might actually floss if he had a device like this. This was the “ah ha” moment, and in short order we formed OralWise Inc., the manufacturers of GumChucks. OralWise has now built an entire would-be entertainment brand behind GumChucks, which features a series of cartoon characters ranging from Count Plaqla to Ninja Vitis to The Flossopher. With embedded technologies and social media applications, GumChucks has helped to propel flossing to the modern age with current and relatable marketing tactics. These applied strategies position GumChucks for what it is: a faster, better, easier approach to flossing and a far more effective tool for communicating the importance of flossing and oral health to the end-user.

You are in an elevator. A man asks what your company does. You have 15 seconds before the door opens. What do you say?

Gatti: GumChucks is the only flossing device in the world that will allow you to create the perfect “C-shape” without ever having to put your hands in your mouth, or having to wrap flossing your fingertips causing cut off blood circulation. It is ideal for those with limited dexterity, large hands, braces, or the other 85 percent of the population who don’t like to or can’t floss regularly. GumChucks is faster, better, easier flossing.

What is the philosophy at OralWise?

Allen: To simplify oral health by making it more accessible.

How can a practice begin working with you?

Gatti: Visit our website, www.gumchucks.com, or call us at 855-424-8257 and we would be happy to provide you with any information you would like! OralWise is *always* pressing forward, striving to revolutionize the industry with new and better products. Stay tuned for more fun and unique oral health innovations to come! ■