

# Ephebodontics : Dental Care Needs For Adolescents A Review

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The dental care needs for adolescents needs to be understand very carefully. The oral dental needs for adolescents are unique, and multifaced. The adolescents experience facial growth, periodontal disease and dental caries at this age. There are various recommendations for managing adolescents. Physical, emotional, and psychological changes are peculiar to the adolescence which bring with them specific oral health care need. Restorative concerns, consent, and diet management are all affected by this transitional period in a person's life<sup>1</sup>.*

**KEYWORDS :** *Adolescents, psychology, role of dentist.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

“Ephebo” means Adolescence, “dontics” means dentistry. It is the age between childhood and adulthood. Ie. Onset of puberty to until complete social independence (10yrs to 19yrs of age). Ephebodontics or adolescent dentistry which the children who are in the process of growing up from childhood to manhood or womanhood. Ephebodontics is the term coined for adolescent dentistry in the April 1969 issue of Dental Clinics of North America<sup>2</sup>. It is the critical age where adolescents neglected oral health care needs, change in dietary pattern, malocclusion, and experience traumatic injuries. The dental health concerns are greatly influenced by aesthetics, habits, and behavioural considerations<sup>3</sup>.

## **Needs And Substages Of Adolescents**

There are four basic needs associated with adolescence they are to find an identity; to accept sexuality and find the sexual role; to establish independence from the family; and to establish a career or vocational choice<sup>4</sup>. There can be three substages of adolescence characteristically, early adolescence is the casting off childhood role and emergence into adolescence, then middle adolescence is participation in teenage subculture and peer group identity, and late adolescence stage in which the individual emergence into adult behavior<sup>5</sup>.

## **Adolescents And Oral Health Care**

High caries attack rate and rampant caries are higher in adolescents due to changes in dietary habits, high intake of carbohydrate diets. Gingival and periodontal problems are due to poor knowledge about brushing methods and giving no importance for oral hygiene. In this transitional age there are the high chances for Congenitally missing teeth and malocclusion may occur. Lack motivation for prevention of oral and dental problems. At this age the adolescents highly takes part in physical and sports activity which may cause traumatically injured teeth. Drug taking and smoking are two very common habits among teenagers. Smoking among teenagers is a complex problem<sup>6</sup>which may be the reason for gingival recession. Various form of tobacco intake may results in oral and dental problems.

## **Special Consideration During Assesment**

On close examination of the oral cavity may give some clues about systemic disease, tobacco usage etc. There is a rapid unpredictable and irregular skeletal and dental growth. Drugs, smoking, sexually transmitted diseases, per pressure, acne, more competitive education, career decisions, alcohol, family pressure make up for some of the challenges facing today's adolescent. Behavioural assessment include: sexual abuse, rampant caries leading to personality problems, extreme anxiety, anorexia nervosa, illicit drug use.

Mucosa shows generalised erythema, is seen due to the effect of smoking, STDs and hyperkeratosis is seen due to smokeless tobacco. Tongue coating and halitosis is due to poor oral hygiene, acetone breath, alcohol breath is detected is due to excessive dieting, alcoholic abuse, metabolic disorders. Gingival inflammation, pregnancy tumour is due to hormonal change, use of oral contraceptive, pregnancy. Teeth shows erosion, wear facets, excessive stains, discolouration is due to bulimia, TMJ disorders, bruxism, tobacco use, existing pulpal pathosis from trauma.

## **Role Of Pedodontics**

The role of pedodontist is to identify and understand the problem of young people at this stage. And to educate and council the parents to insist the children about proper oral hygiene to prevent oral health procedure. This can be done by the following methods, to make interview to the parents prior or a day before an adolescent appointment, to know about the attitudes and behaviour of adolescent towards dental setting, to make them questioning independently revising and finally establishing their own thoughts<sup>5</sup>.

## **Role Of Dentists**

The role of dentist in handling the adolescents are dentist needs to be patience when treating highly anxious adolescents, avoid frustrating the patients, use behavioural management of child having extreme anxiety towards dental treatment, a dentist should desensitization of patients by psychological intervention, if the adolescents is poorly managed and phobic may become an adult phobic which may be worse for all kind of dental treatment<sup>4</sup>.

## **Psychology Of Adolescent**

PERSONAL IDENTITY is the crucial problem of adolescence. The various characters of the adolescents are self directed youth, self adaptive youth, submissive person, define person, unadjusted person, fable personality and imaginary audience. the understanding of the psychology of adolescents by the dentists are very important to understand them and direct them positively to the dental treatments<sup>7</sup>.

## **Summary**

Treating an adolescent should be done with utmost care. The dentist should understand the psychology of the adolescent patients and educate the patients as well the parents about the need for oral hygiene, dental treatment, dietary modifications. Dentist are the first one to identify various

systemic problems and deleterious habits of the adolescent patients and treat them along with the knowledge and consent from their parents. Considerations in treating an adolescent may involve anxiety, phobia, and intellectual dysfunction<sup>7</sup>. For treating an adolescent dentist need good patience level and skill in directing the young one.

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