



Stress & Oral Health



Stress-Related Conditions

- i. Bruxism (Teeth Grinding & Clenching)**
 - Involuntary grinding or clenching of teeth, often during sleep.
 - Can lead to tooth wear, fractures, jaw pain, and headaches.
- ii. Temporomandibular Joint Disorders**
 - Stress can cause or worsen TMD symptoms.
 - Symptoms include jaw pain, difficulty chewing, clicking or popping sounds, and headaches.
- iii. Canker Sores & Aphthous Ulcers**
 - Stress weakens the immune system, increasing the likelihood of these small, painful mouth ulcers.
- iv. Dry Mouth (Xerostomia)**
 - Stress and anxiety can reduce saliva flow, leading to dry mouth.
 - This increases the risk of cavities, gum disease, and bad breath.
- v. Gum Disease**
 - Chronic stress can weaken the immune response, making it easier for bacteria to cause gum inflammation and infections.
 - This can lead to gingivitis and, if untreated, periodontitis.
- vi. Burning Mouth Syndrome (BMS)**
 - A burning sensation in the mouth with no apparent cause, often linked to stress and anxiety.
- vii. Stress-Induced Bad Oral Habits**
 - Nail-biting, chewing on objects, and lip or cheek biting can cause damage to teeth and soft tissues.



Approximately 284 million individuals worldwide are affected by anxiety disorders. 24% reported work as the main source of their daily stress, with full-time employees and students experiencing the highest stress levels.



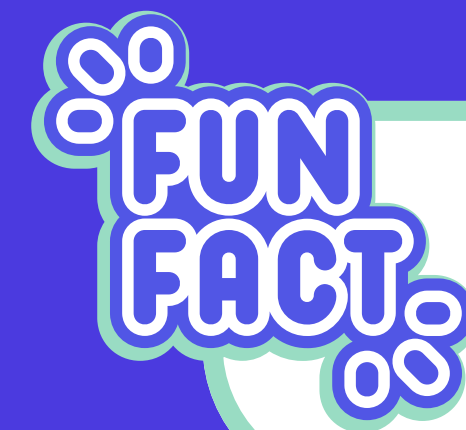
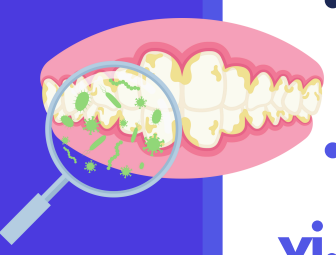
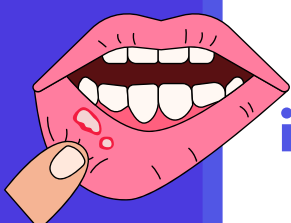
Reducing Stress



- i. Practice Deep Breathing & Relaxation**
 - Try the 4-7-8 breathing technique: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7, and exhale for 8.
 - Meditation and progressive muscle relaxation can also help.
- ii. Get Moving**
 - Exercise releases endorphins (your body's natural stress relievers).
 - Activities like yoga, walking, or dancing can reduce tension.
- iii. Prioritize Sleep**
 - Lack of sleep increases stress levels—aim for 7-9 hours per night.
 - Avoid screens before bedtime and stick to a consistent sleep schedule.
- iv. Eat a Balanced Diet**
 - Avoid excessive caffeine, sugar, and processed foods, which can worsen stress.
 - Include stress-reducing foods like avocados, nuts, dark chocolate, and leafy greens.
- v. Stay Hydrated**
 - Dehydration can increase feelings of anxiety and stress.
- vi. Take Breaks & Practice Self-Care**
 - Engage in hobbies, listen to music, or take a warm bath to unwind.
- vii. Connect with Others**
 - Talking to a trusted friend or family member can help relieve stress.
- viii. Manage Time Wisely**
 - Avoid last-minute stress by planning ahead and setting realistic goals.
- ix. Laugh More!**
 - Laughter lowers stress hormones and boosts your mood, so watch a funny movie or spend time with positive people.
- x. Seek Professional Help if Needed**
 - If stress feels overwhelming, talking to a therapist can provide helpful strategies.

Treatment of Oral Health Conditions

- i. Bruxism (Teeth Grinding & Clenching)**
 - Use a custom-fitted nightguard from your dentist to protect your teeth from grinding at night.
 - Relax your jaw and avoid chewing gum and practice jaw relaxation exercises.
- ii. Temporomandibular Joint Disorders**
 - Apply heat to relax muscles then cold packs to reduce inflammation.
 - Jaw exercises
 - Stick to a soft diet to reduce strain on the jaw.
- iii. Canker Sores & Aphthous Ulcers**
 - Use a salt water rinse: Helps soothe pain and speed up healing.
 - Avoid acidic and spicy foods: These can trigger or worsen sores.
- iv. Dry Mouth (Xerostomia)**
 - Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day while avoiding caffeine and alcohol.
 - Chew sugar-free gum = ↑↑ saliva production.
 - Use saliva substitutes
- v. Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease)**
 - Maintain good oral hygiene: Brush twice daily and floss regularly and use an antibacterial mouthwash.
 - Healthy diet: Vitamin C and omega-3s help reduce inflammation.
 - Regular dental visits and cleaning
- vi. Burning Mouth Syndrome (BMS)**
 - Stay hydrated and avoid spicy foods: Helps prevent irritation.
 - Use mild toothpaste: Avoid strong flavors like mint that may cause burning.
- vii. Stress-Induced Bad Oral Habits**
 - Nail-biting: Keep nails trimmed, use a bitter-tasting polish, or keep hands busy with a stress ball.
 - Lip and cheek biting: Apply lip balm to prevent dry, chewable skin.



Stressed spelled backward is "Desserts" and guess what? Many people crave sweets when stressed, which can lead to cavities! So, stress not only messes with your mind but also your teeth!

