

February is Dental Care Month

LANCASTER — Many of us put off seeing the dentist as long as we can and prefer not to think about the harm our procrastination might do. This may be one of the reasons, says Dairy Council Inc., Southampton, why one month of the year — February — has been set aside to remind us of the importance of daily dental care.

A dental care is more than a hole in your tooth; it is a bacterial infection. This idea is relatively new and was first suggested about the turn of the century. Not everyone believed it. The story goes that one dental researcher told his assistant that she — like everyone else — had harmful bacteria on her teeth. She remained unconvinced and, to show off his new microscope, the researcher took a sample of plaque from her teeth and let her see the living bacteria through the scope. She was so horrified that she had all her teeth taken out.

Such a drastic reaction isn't necessary when ongoing dental care is practiced. Dental decay begins with sticky plaque — a thin, colorless layer of bacteria that is constantly forming on your teeth. The bacteria that live in dental plaque use sugars in our food to produce acids that attack the tooth enamel. After repeated acid at-

tacks, a tooth decays.

Plaque is also the major cause of periodontal disease — the biggest reason for tooth loss after age 35. Contributing factors include tartar, food impaction, faulty restorations, or thermal extremes. Age, nutrition, and hormonal imbalance and medical and emotional problems may also play a part.

Periodontal disease usually begins as gingivitis — a reddening and swelling of normally pink gums, accompanied by occasional bleeding. The more destructive stage is called periodontitis. Gums pull away from the irritants and create pockets between teeth; these pockets fill with calculus (tartar) and more plaque. Eventually plaque destroys supporting bone and ligaments and the teeth may become loose and either fall out or have to be removed.

Studies show that nutrition plays a big role in preventing this disease. Nutrients that favorably condition the periodontium are protein, calcium, phosphorus, vitamins A and D, ascorbic acid, and the B-complex vitamins.

Periodontal disease is not usually clinically evident until adulthood, but its beginnings are probably established in childhood.

Children can reduce the number of dental caries and the possibility of long-term dental problems, says Dairy Council, by avoiding sticky

sugar snacks between meals, reducing simple sugar consumption, using sugar-free gum, brushing regularly, using

fluoridated water, toothpaste, and mouthwash to strengthen enamel, and having regular checkups and treatment.

Dauphin plans conservation series

HARRISBURG — A three-part Conservation Symposium Series sponsored by the Dauphin County Conservation District is scheduled to begin next week.

On Wednesday the symposium series starts off with a Bluebird Nesting Box Workshop where each participant can learn of the habitat needs and assemble a nesting box for their property. A pre-registration fee is required to attend the workshop at the Fort Hunter County Park Barn from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. To register call 717-652-7048.

The series continues on February 22 with a panel discussion on "Water Quality and Agriculture," a look at nonpoint

source pollution. This symposium addresses the number one source of water pollution, soil erosion and sedimentation.

Seven panelists will present their views on nonpoint pollution. A farmer's perspective, programs to reduce erosion, why current programs are inadequate and should soil conservation on agricultural lands be voluntary or mandatory, should start an active discussion. The Susquehanna River drainage basin's impact on the Chesapeake Bay will complete this symposium, along with a look at future soil resource management programs.

The nonpoint discussion from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. will be preceded

by a half-hour of ecological melodies performed by Bill Oliver, an environmental folk singer from Austin, Tex., starting at 7 p.m. This, the second symposium, will be held east of Harrisburg in the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Building at 75 South Houcks Road.

"Acid Rain" concludes the series on February 29, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. This topic for five panelists representing the Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania Sierra Club, Consolidation Coal Company from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Fish Commission and the Pennsylvania Power and Light Company will address the acid rain issue from both sides of the fence.



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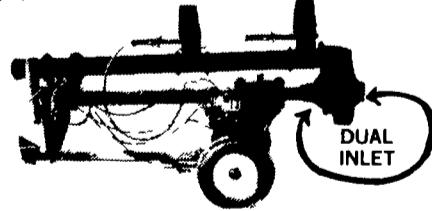
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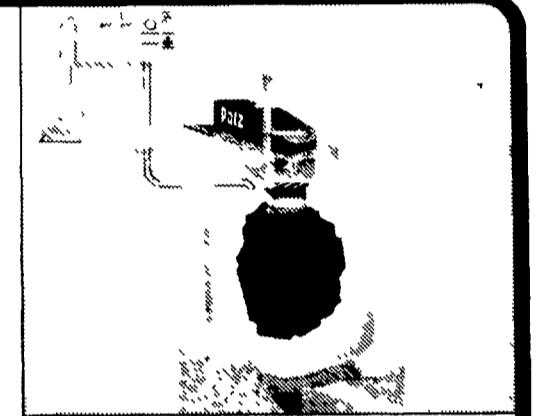
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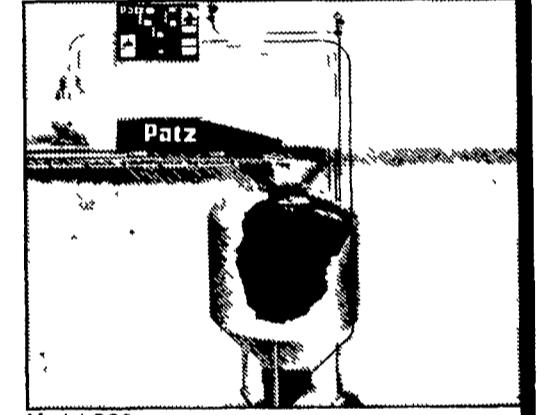
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