NEWS

PAYMENT PER PATIENT FOR PILOT PRACTICES

Sixty-eight dental practices will trial new changes to the current dental contract as part of the Government's commitment to improving the oral health of NHS patients, particularly children.

The trials will look at ways of increasing patient access and promoting preventative dental treatments like fluoride varnish.

The pilot practices will test changes that will see dentists paid for the number of patients they care for and the health results, rather than the number of courses of treatment dentists perform.

FRUIT JUICE NOT THAT BAD AFTER ALL

A study has shown there to be no significant difference in the enamel mineralising effects of intrinsic sugars (contained within foods) and extrinsic sugars (added in food manufacturing and found in fruit juice and honey).[1]

The study was performed using a device placed in the mouth to test how conducive substances are to promoting dental caries, to compare the effect on enamel demineralisation of fruits and vegetables, consumed either whole or in a juiced form.

The findings contradict a long-held belief in the UK that intrinsic sugars are 'safer for teeth' than extrinsic sugars.

The study was conducted among ten healthy adults, who had normal salivary function.

Each subject wore a removable appliance which carried pre-demineralised human enamel slabs. They each consumed one of the test foods seven times each day for ten days. They were instructed to brush their teeth twice a day, using fluoride-free toothpaste, while the appliances were out of the mouth.

'The results show that eating fruits and vegetables as "whole" foodstuffs may cause similar demineralisation in enamel to when they are consumed as a juice, when frequently consumed by people who are not using fluoride toothpaste' said Professor Monty Duggal, co-author of the study.

1. Issa A I, Toumba K J, Preston A J, Duggal M S. Comparison of the effects of whole juiced fruits and vegetables on enamel demineralisation in situ. Caries Res 2011; **45:** 448-452.