Bad Teeth Run in the Family? Here's How to Break the Cycle Transcript

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How Family History Affects Oral Health

why your family history could ruin your smile and what to do about it. So people will say things like, I always get cavities because my mom always got cavities.

However, there is something called epigenetics, which is the way that our genes are read and changed based on our environment. So let me explain this because this is a concept that's a little tricky.

This is something that I actually teach about in my new book, Living Well with Dr. Michelle. Think about a hill and a ball that's at the top of the hill.

That ball starts to roll down the hill, but where it goes when it reaches the bottom is based on what it encounters on the way down.

Epigenetics Explained With a Hill Analogy

So if it's rolling down this way and it hits a rock and it bounces over this direction, or it goes through a gully and it pushes it this way, or it hits a tree that pushes it over this direction, that ball is going to end up at a different place at the bottom of the hill depending on what it encounters on the way to the bottom.

The same thing happens with our cells and our bodies. So we have a certain DNA that we're born with, right? Half of it comes from our mom and half of it comes from our dad.

Every single cell has that same DNA inside of it. However, as our bodies go through life, the things that we're exposed to, the things that we feed it, the ways that we move it, all of these things influence how our cells read that DNA.

I like to think of it as a recipe book. So as we hit different things in our lives, like those gullies and trees and rocks on the way down the hill, it changes where our genes will end up.

This is really great news because just because your mom had cavities doesn't mean you have to as well. There are many things that you can do to change the way that those genes are actually read.

So let's talk about some examples. The things that I hear so often are cavities, my enamel is weak, saliva.

Common Inherited Dental Concerns

For some reason, I just have more bugs in here. The way that the teeth are aligned. I have crooked teeth just like my grandpa. Or I have gum disease. Yep, everybody in my family has gum disease too.

Those are the four ones that are very common that people tell me. But let's talk about how you could change all of those things. Let's start with cavities.

Just because your mom always had cavities doesn't mean you have to. Most likely if she had a lot of cavities it was because of 1. She didn't take care of her teeth and you can absolutely change that, right?

You can use the right products and you can treat them the right way. 2. She may not actually have been absorbing nutrients properly, so her body was stealing nutrients from her teeth to feed the rest of her.

Well, you can fix that as well. So that's where we do the baking soda test to determine is your gut actually working properly? Are you absorbing nutrients the way you should?

These are the two things that I talk about with people all the time.

Preventing Cavities and Supporting Gut Health

Just because genetically someone else had a lot of cavities doesn't mean that you need to as well. Take care of them the way that I teach and get your gut working the way that it should.

Also supplement if need be, minerals from the outside, minerals from the inside, so that you never have to have another cavity. Alright, the next one, saliva or bacteria.

Well, a real great thing to do there is start to balance what's going on in your mouth. So what do I recommend? A couple of things. One is oil pulling.

Oil pulling is taking about a tablespoon of oil, swishing it through your gums and your teeth everywhere, spitting it out after about 10 minutes into a tissue and throwing it away.

What you're doing is helping to balance the bugs in your mouth. I really also love my mouthwash. It's an herbal formula that has all sorts of herbs that help to manage the bacteria in the mouth.

Just because again your dad had a lot of cavities or gum disease and you think oh, there's just a lot of bacteria in here, doesn't mean you have to as well.

You can control and manage what's going on in your mouth with what you're putting in your mouth.

Balancing Mouth Bacteria and Saliva

The third one is crooked teeth. Oh man, I look just like my uncle, whatever it might be. You know, my teeth are crooked, my mouth is small. Well, I always go back to what did you inherit from that uncle or whomever it was that led to the mouth small, crooked teeth problem?

Oftentimes, it's a tongue tie. Your tongue is tied down to the floor of the mouth, so it's unable to go up, form the roof of the mouth, everything forms narrow.

There's a lot of growth and development of things that we, if we can catch them early, can prevent in children. So if you see that your child's face is growing quite narrow and long, if their mouth breathing, if their teeth are crowded, especially with baby teeth, trouble, trouble brewing, we can do interceptive orthodontics where we can get ahead of the problem and help to grow their mouth while they're growing.

What if it's you and you're already done growing?

Crooked Teeth, Tongue Ties, and Early Orthodontics

Great news, we can back up and we can actually make the mouth bigger, make more space, straighten things out just like they should have been. So just because the genetics were there doesn't mean you or anybody else going down the line has to stay there.

The last one is gum disease. This actually goes a lot with that saliva one we talked about and bacterial balance. It's just about the environment you give it.

It's just about the rocks and trees and things that your genes and cells encounter on the way down. If you do more to take care of your gums, then let's say your grandpa did who lost his teeth at age, you know, 27. If you do more, you're going to change where your ball ends up at the end of the hill.

This is not a death sentence for your mouth. You are not a prisoner to your DNA. You absolutely can change the

way that your cells read that DNA and you can change your health.

So really at the end of the day, you are in charge of your own health and there are so many things that you can do to help improve and ensure the health of your mouth and your body.

The great news is there are more and more practitioners that have the knowledge and the education and the resources to help you be able to do this.

Gum Disease, Genetics, and Taking Control

If you are ready to change what your DNA is telling you or the outcome of your health, then go and find a practitioner who's right there with you. If you're local to our area, we would love to see you here at Total Care Dental and Wellness in Utah.

If not, please go find a dentist that is talking about these things at my directory, LivingWellWithDrMichelle.com. You're in charge of your health and now you have more tools than ever to make sure that it's not your genes, but it's what you do that ensures that you are going to live well.