

## Mythbusters Dental

There are a lot of topics that probably don't need a whole article for discussion. Some of them are just too involved and require some understanding of tooth, gum, and bone anatomy and physiology. Sometimes I try to explain these and get the feeling that people believe I'm just making up the explanation. So I have listed some with short answers in this column. Continue to believe if you like (but it's not really a matter of faith).

"Coke can dissolve a tooth." Everybody who believes this seems to have had the same second grade teacher who did it as an experiment. No, a tooth just sitting in a can of any carbonated beverage cannot dissolve a tooth. Carbohydrates feeding the bacteria on the teeth in your mouth can eventually cause decay, but carbonation, "acids", and sugar in a can of coke will not dissolve a tooth.

"Baby teeth are not important." Too bad kids can't decide this. Not sure where this originates, but baby teeth are very important. Nutrition, self-esteem, pain (though kids rarely complain), and the eruption and functioning of permanent teeth are all good reasons to maintain baby teeth. Probably could be a whole column, but if you don't believe, then likely no amount of discussion will change your mind.

"Mouthwash cured my bad breath." If you have a temporary condition that is causing the bad breath, mouthwash may cover it up for a while, but bad breath is usually a bigger health issue. Prescription mouth rinses may help to heal some of these conditions, not over-the-counter potions--no matter how well they are marketed.

"My insurance company says you charge too much." This is not a popular as it once was, but still one of my favorites. You believe your insurance company? Really? There are better ways to determine this.