



August 2022

Driftless Holistic Wellness

*“Let food be thy
medicine and
medicine be thy
food”*

-Hippocrates

Driftless Holistic
Wellness is sharing office
space with [O'Brien](#)
[Physical Therapy](#)
beginning Tuesday
August 2nd

For in-person
appointments you can
visit
3208 State Road
La Crosse, WI

Welcome to Driftless Holistic Wellness! Here we focus on finding root causes for our symptoms and nourishing our bodies into more optimal health. This month we focus on non-toxic oral health and additional adjunctive practices to help keep our mouths clean and healthy in ways that won't harm the rest of our bodies.

The Fallouts of Fluoride

Most of us grew up chewing on fluoride tablets, getting fluoride foam treatments, and rinsing with fluoride mouthwash in our younger years (or still today), in an effort to try and strengthen or re-mineralize our teeth, prevent cavities, and hopefully avoid large dental bills. Our city water is even fluorinated in an effort to keep our “pearly whites” white. Sadly, all of this fluoride exposure and consumption poses quite a danger to our bodies.

- Fluoride is a naturally occurring element in our soil and water, but also a synthetic byproduct of phosphate fertilizer and aluminum processing. It can be found in unsafe levels in our drinking water, beverages (especially in tea), and dental products.
- It travels through our bloodstream and collects in areas of high calcium (teeth and bones) and leads to **skeletal fluorosis**- a disease state in which the bones build up fluoride and become stiff, painful, weakened, and at risk for fractures as we age. The EPA found that long term exposure to water fluoride levels higher than 4.0mg/L results in this disease. It's estimated 40% of Americans already have mild fluorosis.
- Fluoride also has an affinity for growth plates, or areas of increased bone growth, and has been linked with a rare form of osteosarcoma in young boys.
- The American Dental Association has recognized that children exposed to water fluoride levels at 2.0mg/L or greater can develop **dental fluorosis**- an excessive accumulation of fluoride in teeth that prevents the normal development of enamel in children and can cause white spotting on the teeth. They now recommend infants and children avoid any toothpastes or mouthwashes containing fluoride, or fluoride treatments, until the age of 2.
- A 2002 systematic review by Harvard TH Chen School of public health found that fluoride exposure during pregnancy can affect a baby's brain and nervous system development in utero and decrease IQ.
- Fluoride displaces other halogens like chlorine, bromine, and iodine and has been shown to disrupt thyroid function and increase TSH, while decreasing T₃ and T₄, contributing to hypothyroidism.





Driftless Holistic Wellness

Check out the “[Resources](#)” tab on www.driftlessholisticwellness.net for reputable whole-food supplement brands, greens powders, and snacks, and high quality nutritional products. Additional supplementation options are available through my [Fullscript](#) services as well.

Recipes

Bentonite Toothpaste

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp bentonite clay powder
3-4 Tbsp distilled water (or boiled and cooled water)
3 drops liquid stevia or xylitol (optional)
Pinch of good sea salt
10-15 drops essential oil (peppermint, clove, cinnamon, lemon, orange, oregano, spearmint)

Instructions: Measure clay powder into a plastic or glass container and mix with water with a non-metal spoon. Add sweetener, essential oils, salt and stir till smooth. Adjust to taste. Store at room temperature and enjoy. May experiment with adding ground spices (cloves, ginger, oregano) or activated charcoal.



So how do we keep our teeth clean and white, free of cavities without fluoride? Keep brushing, (with fluoride-free toothpaste) and flossing your teeth, but try adding in some additional oral hygiene practices.

Oil Pulling

Oil pulling is a traditional Ayurvedic oral cleansing technique that essentially uses coconut, olive, or sesame oils as a mouthwash, though it has surprising [benefits](#):

- The act of swishing coconut oil in the mouth for 5-20 minutes emulsifies the oil and aids in the release of lauric acid from the coconut oil, helping to reduce the biofilms and the bacteria responsible for bad breath, gum inflammation, and cavities.
- A 2016 [study](#) in children found oil pulling with coconut oil to be as effective as swishing with chlorhexidine in reducing *Streptococcus mutans*, a bacterial strain, key in the buildup of plaque and cavities.
- An additional [study](#) in 2015 found a reduction in the markers for plaque-induced gingivitis in adolescents who oil pulled for 30 days.
- Sesame oil was found to be as effective as chlorhexidine mouthwash for reducing halitosis (bad breath) in a 2014 study.
- Chewing and swishing activates your parotid/salivary glands, responsible for producing enzymes that deactivate chemicals and metals we encounter in our food/water.

Bentonite Clay

Clay powder, a form of volcanic ash, expands and becomes negatively charged when wet. It then attracts toxins and heavy metals (and other large positively charged particles), and exchanges them for minerals like calcium, silica and magnesium. While used often as a facial mask or digestive tonic for food poisoning, clay is a perfect way to help provide remineralization for our teeth and enamel, and can be used in toothpaste and as a nourishing mouthwash. It is also a mild abrasive, perfect for polishing and removing built-up plaque and food deposits on our teeth. Alkaline in nature, it is also able to raise the pH of our mouths, helping to combat the acidity that leftover sugary foods can create, and minimizing damage to our tooth enamel.



Gargling

Swap out your harsh alcohol and chlorhexidine-based fluorinated mouthwashes for more natural but effective alternatives:

- Salt or baking soda water- helps to alkalize the mouth, remove remaining food debris, and reduce gum inflammation. A 2017 [study](#) showed it to be as effective as chlorhexidine mouthwash for reducing dental plaque
- Green tea- [Studies](#) have found swishing green tea to be effective at cutting down on oral bacteria and odor in those with gingivitis, but [gargling](#) specifically decreases upper respiratory infections (just be sure to rinse your mouth with water to prevent staining).





Coconut Oil Toothpaste

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp unrefined organic coconut oil
1 tsp ground erythritol or xylitol
3 drops of peppermint essential oil
(or extract)
1 pinch of mineral rich salt
(Redmond's real salt, pink salt, sea salt)

Instructions:

Combine ingredients in a small bowl and transfer to an airtight container, once thoroughly mixed. Spit into trash as opposed to the sink to avoid clogging your pipes!

Tongue Scraping/Brushing

- The Ayurvedic practice of scraping the tongue has been found to be effective for decreasing the oral bacteria responsible for bad breath.
- Studies show that both a brush and scraper have been found to be equally effective, though combining brushing, scraping, and mouth washing has been found to be most effective at decreasing bacterial load, and thus impacting halitosis or bad breath than any one method or other lesser combination.

Wrap up

While small amounts of fluoride may help our enamel for a time, the long-term accumulation of this toxin can affect our body's normal functioning.

- Focus on minimizing eating processed sugars, sodas, and processed carbohydrates, as they feed the bacteria living in our mouths.
- If you do eat something sugary, be sure to rinse out your mouth or gargle afterwards to remove food debris and prevent bacterial growth.
- Continue good oral hygiene practices using toothpastes, swishes, and floss, switching to less toxic options, or making your own!
- Try your hand at tongue scraping or brushing and see if you notice a difference in your breath!



In the spirit of improving my oral health, I tried oil pulling for the first time recently with coconut oil and quite enjoyed the process. My husband John even joined in a few times. It seems odd at first, putting a solid oil into your mouth and pretending to chew it until it becomes liquid. The swishing gets tiring after 7 or 8 minutes, especially if you put too much in your mouth. But even that much is a great oral workout! I'd recommend only 1-2 tsp at a time. Be sure to spit in the trash when you're done, as you don't want the oil clogging your pipes. I'd also recommend rinsing with one of the above mouthwashes, or choosing to brush your teeth after the fact, to make sure you remove any bacteria or toxins you happened to agitate with your vigorous swishing. Stay tuned to see if continuing oil pulling daily helps minimize my receding gums or tooth sensitivity.

-Kay Wiedenbeck RN, BSN, OCN, NRT