



New “Smart Bomb” Mouthwash

By Dr. Eric Gustavsen, Published in the Walla Walla Union Bulletin 8/24/12

In the summer of 1985 I took a seminar from an

esteemed researcher, Dr. John Featherstone Phd, who dropped this bombshell on his audience of dental students: Within the year he would release his patented mouthwash that would “eliminate dental decay, as we know it.”

Now, 27 years later, UCLA researcher Wen Yuan Shi Phd, chair of the biology section at the UCLA School of Dentistry, says he has developed a new mouthwash that holds promise for eliminating the bacteria that cause tooth decay. He refers to it as a “smart bomb” as it targets only one type of bacteria out of the 600 or so in your mouth. It is currently in clinical trials but preliminary research shows that it is very effective. FDA approval is needed before it can be available to the public.

Could this be the game changer that will finally eliminate tooth decay? This mouthwash was developed to selectively eliminate streptococcus mutans, the primary *bacteria* involved in causing cavities.

Press releases indicate that it was effective in eliminating this specific bacterium for up to four days after one rinse. The small study was conducted on 12 people and no further information has been released since the product went into clinical trials in March.

Looking on the sunny side, if this product works as well as its developer and the Colgate Palmolive Corp. hope, it could have a dramatic impact on childhood tooth decay. After being in retreat for the last couple of decades this scourge is reemerging.

The other age group for which it would be extremely beneficial is the elderly. As a result of declining dexterity and reduced saliva flow from medications, these people often start getting cavities after going for many years with perfect checkups.

What the press release doesn't mention is that for the rest of us, tooth decay is almost a completely preventable process. For the past 50 years trace amounts of fluoride have been added to many municipal water sources having a huge impact on tooth decay. Diet also has an indisputable role in promoting or halting decay. We can selectively neutralize that same bacteria, streptococcus mutans, by eating a diet low in simple sugars. Newly formulated toothpastes containing Amorphous Calcium Phosphate (ACP) can help rebuild enamel broken down by acid from these bacteria. A natural sweetener called Xylitol can make it impossible for these bacteria to extend their sticky fingers and cling to your teeth. And of course, all plaque needs to be scrubbed off the teeth every day with brush and floss as this healthy habit has the biggest impact on tooth decay.



This mouthwash will not prevent the destruction caused by acid in drinks like Coca Cola, energy drinks like Gatorade and even Snapple Iced Tea. These beverages bypass the bacteria and apply the acid directly onto the teeth themselves.

Sadly, this particular rinse will also have no effect on the biggest dental problem adults face; tooth loss from gum disease. Different bacteria cause this condition, and there is a slight danger that people will mistakenly believe the rinse will also cure this malady.

Perhaps this is finally the product that Dr. Featherstone envisioned back in 1985, and hopefully it will work as well as advertised! But, even if it does I recommend you hang on to your toothbrush. Your wife doesn't want to look at yesterdays' broccoli on your teeth.