

Orthodontists Join With The American Lung Association For The Betterment Of Patient Health



(NAPSA)—With nearly 5,000 teenagers and preteens starting the smoking habit every day, joining the 47 million adults who already smoke, orthodontists are not going to ignore this important health issue.

In a pre-emptive strike against smoking and tobacco use among young people and adults, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), with the American Lung Association, have announced a new national initiative to educate pre-teen, teenage and adult orthodontic patients about the dangers and pitfalls of smoking and chewing tobacco.

“Orthodontists are working with the American Lung Association because of our concern for our patients’ overall health. We are in a unique position to influence our patients given the fact that we generally see patients every four to six weeks during a formative stage of these young people’s lives,” said Dr. Michael D. Rennert, president of the AAO. “By preventing patients from starting, or by putting current smokers in touch with cessation programs, we can help save lives.”

Orthodontists Putting the Bite on Tobacco Use is a new approach in the fight to snuff out smoking for the betterment of patients’ oral and general health. With 2 million adolescents becoming new smokers each year and 80 percent of orthodontic patients under 18, there is ample opportunity for orthodontists to educate and practice preventive medicine.

But delivering an anti-tobacco message to preteens and teenagers is no easy task since most young people can’t relate to smoking-related diseases like lung cancer, heart disease and emphysema—illnesses which usually strike adults.

To combat the seemingly distant health implications, the AAO will appeal to young people’s concern over how others perceive them, using these points:

- Others will smell smoke on your clothes, hair and breath.
- Smoking will discolor soon-to-be straight teeth.

- Second-hand smoke is extremely harmful to those around you.
- Cigarettes are highly addictive.

These issues plus the immediate and eventual health implications are the reasons that the AAO and the American Lung Association are committed to snuffing out smoking for orthodontic patients in the new millennium.

The AAO is comprised of more than 13,500 members in the United States, Canada and abroad. Founded in 1900, the AAO supports research and education leading to quality patient care and promotes increased public awareness of the need for and benefits of orthodontic treatment. For a free video packed with valuable information about orthodontics, call 1-800-STRAIGHT or to learn more about orthodontics online, visit the Web site at www.braces.org.

Orthodontists are uniquely qualified to correct “bad bites.” They are specialists in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of dental and facial irregularities. The American Dental Association requires orthodontists to have at least two years of post-doctoral, advanced specialty training in orthodontics in an accredited program, after graduation from dental school.

For nearly 100 years, the American Lung Association has been fighting lung disease with the generous support of the public and volunteers. While they have seen many advances against lung disease, they realize that the work is not finished. Looking forward to their second century, American Lung will continue to strive to make breathing easier for everyone through programs of education, community service, advocacy, and research. For more information on the American Lung Association, visit the Web site at www.lungusa.org. The American Lung Association’s activities are supported by donations to Christmas Seals® and other voluntary contributions.