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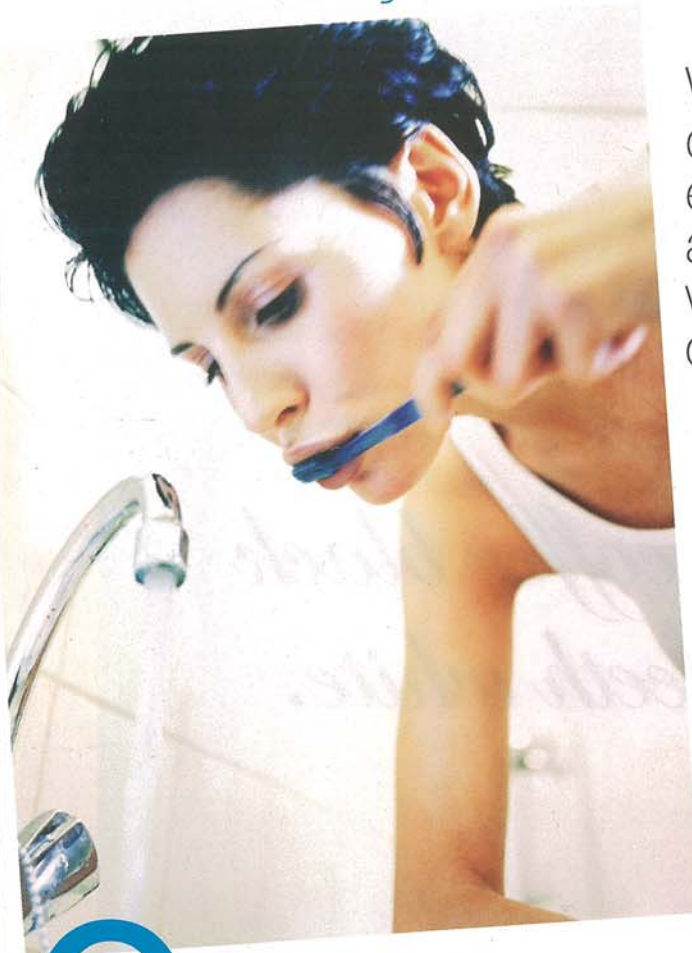
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health:you ask



What's up, doc? Our experts give an R_x for your wellness questions



than nothing but may not massage the gum as well as manual flossing.

Q: "How do I know if I am lactose intolerant?"

According to **Astrid Chong**, a naturopathic doctor at Truestar Health & Wellness Clinic in Toronto, if you commonly experience bloating, intestinal gas, nausea, a grumbling stomach, abdominal cramps and diarrhea after eating a dairy-rich meal, you may be lactose intolerant, which means your body is unable to digest lactose, a sugar found in milk. This is a result of your body lacking an enzyme called lactase, which breaks down lactose into energy sources. If you are deficient in the lactase enzyme, lactose from dairy will remain in the small intestine and draw fluid into the area, resulting in diarrhea and bloating. Bacteria in the small intestine will ferment the sugars there, causing gas.

FLARE tip

Grab a bowl! The new wonder-fruit is the cherry, which has recently been found to contain melatonin, a hormone credited with fighting insomnia and jet lag.

Q: "Are electric toothbrushes and flossers better than the traditional kind?"

According to Toronto-based dentist **Dr. Ellen Dayan**, it depends on the type of brush and any dental problems you have. There are three options when choosing an electric toothbrush: inexpensive ones that are made by toothpaste manufacturers and available at drugstores; more expensive ones, found in department stores; and specialized ones (such as Rota-dent), which are available through dentists' offices. Although electric toothbrushes can help remove plaque more efficiently, what's most important is placing any

type of brush in the right spot—where the tooth meets the gum line. If you have severe crowding or a rotated tooth, specialized brushes from your dentist have features such as small or pointed heads for cleaning under bridges and braces, between teeth and around rotated teeth. (Your dentist can demonstrate how.) As for flossers, using traditional dental floss is best; the key to effective flossing is wrapping the floss around each tooth and pressing down deeply between the gum and tooth, then drawing the floss up the tooth. This motion stimulates the gums and keeps them healthy. Electric flossers (such as Oral-B's Hummingbird) are better

You can conduct a simple test yourself by drinking at least two eight-ounce glasses of milk on an empty stomach and noting any gastrointestinal symptoms that develop in the next four hours. For a proper diagnosis, your health-care practitioner can administer a lactose tolerance test. If you are lactose intolerant, eliminate dairy foods that contain lactose, such as milk, butter and cheese. There are now a wide variety of dairy products available with predigested lactose or digestive enzyme supplements that incorporate lactase. Or choose soy products or rice milk as dairy alternatives. If you decide to avoid dairy products, take a supplement to ensure you are getting enough calcium. **■**



Send us your health questions. Email: healthyouask@flare.com or mail to: Health: You Ask, **FLARE**, 1 Mount Pleasant Rd., 8th Floor, Toronto, Ont., M4Y 2Y5.