Magnolia bark found effective against oral germs

Although U.S. life expectancy has reached an all-time high of 77.9 years, 45 other countries have higher life expectancies.

“Since 2000, there has been a virtual stagnation in health improvement,” the report’s authors charge. “The failure to demonstrate progress is particularly worrisome given that the U.S. continues to trail other nations in important health indicators such as infant mortality and healthy life expectancy.”

Vermont surpassed Minnesota as the healthiest state in the nation, with Minnesota, Hawaii, New Hampshire and Connecticut, respectively, rounding out the top five. Mississippi is the least healthy state, followed by Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

The Census Bureau reports that the number of uninsured Americans has worsened from 13.4 percent in 1990 to 15.8 percent today. “Up 0.5 percent from last year, an alarming 47 million Americans are living without health insurance,” the report charges. “Tragically, more than 9 million of the uninsured are children.”

SMOKING

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Their study of 66 patients who received 165 implants over five years found that 15.8 percent of implants failed in smokers, compared to only 1.4 percent of implants given to non-smokers.

Smoking impedes blood flow to the bone and tissues surrounding gums and teeth, impairing their ability to heal. Implants then fail when they are unable to integrate with surrounding bone tissues.

A study by Boston University School of Dental Medicine professor Elizabeth Kaye Krall in the April 2006 issue of the Journal of Dental Research found that cigarette smokers are 70 percent more likely to need root canal treatment than non-smokers.

The Boston University study, which began in 1968 and tracked dental and physical health over 50 years, showed that smokers who quit see an improvement in oral health, and the amount of time a person smokes and the duration a person remains smoke-free directly affects risk.

A man who smokes for fewer than four years has a 20 percent greater risk of needing treatment than does a non-smoker, but the risk doubles for men who smoke from five to 12 years. If a person stays smoke-free for nine years, his risk drops back to the level for someone who never smoked.