

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

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Issue 12, Spring 2004

Welcome to the twelfth Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter. Thank you for your positive feedback on previous issues. If you have any comments on our newsletter or anything you would like to see in it, please let us know.

Practice News



Welcome to our Spring 2004 Newsletter. All at The Dental Centre hope you are emerging from the cold and dark days of winter, having avoided the numerous bugs and nasties that were doing the rounds.

Our website, www.thedentalcentre.org, is currently undergoing a revamp. So please pop along to the site and let us know what you think. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated.

Dental Hygienist

Donna, our dental hygienist has now been with us for two years. She is proving very popular and many patients are showing the benefits of her treatment. From 1st June, the cost of a visit to the hygienist will be £32 for a half hour session.

There is information about the hygienist, what she does and how a visit with her differs from a visit with Adam, on the back of this newsletter.

On the subject of dental hygiene, those of you who floss (or are thinking about flossing!), might be interested in a new product we now stock. Called 'Floss Picks', they make the flossing process much less fiddly. Please ask for details.

Holiday

Adam will be on holiday from Tuesday 1st to Friday 4th June. The practice will still be open and the phone manned during normal opening times. Arrangements will be made for patients with severe emergencies.

Outside of normal working hours, including Bank Holidays, there is an emergency service available. Details of this can be heard on the practice's answer phone message.



Congratulations

Our nurse, Ayshea, is getting married in June, to her fiancé Trevor. I am sure you will join Adam and the rest of the staff in wishing them all the best for their big day and every success for the future.



Tooth Whitening

We are seeing great results with our 'at home' tooth whitening system. We get our whitening kits direct from America, where it is the number one system. We have just received a delivery of a new higher strength formulation, which gives optimum results in less than a week! Further information can be obtained from The Dental Centre.



Focus On Fluoride

There is currently a debate raging as to whether extra fluoride should be added by water companies to our drinking water. At the moment, only around 10% of the UK population's water supply – mainly the Midlands and the North East, has extra fluoride added.

What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a natural mineral that is found in water. The amount of Fluoride in the water varies from area to area.

What are the benefits of fluoride?

Fluoride has been researched for over 50 years and water fluoridation has been proven to cut dental decay by 40 to 60%. Fluoride is present in many different natural sources, but can also be artificially added to our drinking water. A level of one part in a million has been shown to be most effective. Fluoride can greatly help dental health by strengthening the tooth enamel, making it more resistant to tooth decay. Many toothpastes now contain fluoride, and this is how most people get their fluoride.



Are fluoride toothpastes enough?

If your drinking water does not have fluoride added, fluoride toothpaste is effective. However, some people are more prone to dental decay. If so, we may suggest using fluoride supplements, which can help to reduce dental decay. The amount of fluoride in toothpaste is usually enough to lower the level of decay. In areas where the water supply is fluoridated, fluoride toothpaste provides additional protection. However, in these areas, children under 7 years old should use one of the toothpastes containing lower levels of fluoride.

Where can I find fluoride?

All water contains fluoride. Your local water supplier or health authority should be able to tell you how much fluoride is in the water in your area. The main supplier of water in the Rickmansworth area is Three Valleys Water. Their website (<http://www.3valleys.co.uk>) has the facility to check fluoride content in the water according to your postcode. One part of fluoride for every million parts of water (1ppm) is considered enough.

Fluoride also comes in specially formulated gels, drops, tablets or mouthwashes which are recommended for those people who need added protection.

Fluoride is also in salt and tea, and some countries artificially add fluoride to their table salt and milk.

Should children have extra fluoride?

Many areas have enough fluoride in the water to help fight tooth decay. However, where the level in the water supply is low, it is sometimes necessary for children to take extra fluoride in the form of supplements. It is extremely important that these are only taken on the advice and instruction of a dentist.

Continued Overleaf

What are the side effects?

'Dental fluorosis' can occur when too much fluoride is taken. This can happen for example when the water supply is already fluoridated and supplements are taken, or when children 'eat' toothpaste. Campaigners against fluoridation claim that an overdose of fluoride can sometimes cause 'brittle bone' disease and digestive disorders, but these suggestions have not been scientifically proven.

What is fluorosis?

Enamel fluorosis is a result of too much fluoride, absorbed while the enamel of the teeth is forming. Severe fluorosis may lead to pitting of the enamel and discolouration. However, severe fluorosis is rare in the UK.

In its mildest form, fluorosis appears as very fine pearly white lines or flecking on the surface of the teeth. This mild fluorosis is often undetectable except by a dental expert.

Is fluoride safe?

Many reports have been published about the pros and cons of fluoride. After many years the scientific conclusion is that fluoride is of great benefit to dental health and helps to reduce decay, while causing no harmful side effects to general health if recommended doses are not exceeded.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the issues discussed, please do not hesitate to ask Adam or any of the staff at The Dental Centre.

Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have a dental hygienist, Donna. She is here on Mondays and Thursdays.

Listed below are a few of the most frequently asked questions about hygienists and what a visit to the hygienist involves.

What is a hygienist?

Dental hygienists are specially trained to work with the dentist in providing care tailored to the patients' needs.

They play an important role in dental health care and are mainly concerned with gum health, education in correct home care and the application of preventive materials to the teeth and gums.

The hygienist provides professional cleaning of the teeth for the patient. Most importantly they educate the patient in the best way to keep the teeth free of plaque.

Why is this treatment important?

Regular professional cleaning combined with your home care will help maintain a healthy mouth. A clean and healthy mouth will improve your appearance, help you keep your teeth and give you fresh breath.

Can a hygienist help prevent dental disease?

The training of the hygienist is centred on preventing dental disease. Carefully removing the deposits that build up on the teeth and teaching you how to prevent it reforming again, will go a long way to slowing the progress of gum disease. Anti-bacterial gels and solutions can be applied under the gum to kill the bacteria causing gum disease. By discussing your diet and recommending other preventive measures your decay rate can also be reduced.

Children can benefit from having their teeth polished. The hygienist can also apply fluoride gels and solutions to help prevent decay. The permanent back teeth can also benefit from having the fissures sealed.

Why doesn't the dentist do this work?

Dr. Deitsch will carry out this type of work. However, the hygienist has been specially trained to carry out scaling and polishing and can spend longer with you. They are also expert at teaching you how to look after your teeth and gums. Often the hygienist will spend a number of appointments getting the gums healthy ready for the dentist to do the more complex treatment.

Will the treatment hurt?

Scaling and polishing is usually pain-free. However, if you do experience some discomfort the hygienist can eliminate this with the use of topical anaesthetic creams or by giving you some local anaesthetic. It is important that you let the hygienist know at the time so that some pain control can be given.

What can I do to help the Hygienist?

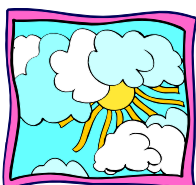
You can do a great deal to help yourself and the hygienist as you are in control of your mouth between visits to the practice.

Your hygienist will have shown you how to remove plaque with a toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. You will also have been shown how to clean between your teeth with floss, tape or little brushes. There are many products now available and your hygienist will recommend those that are appropriate for you.

Do I need to see the hygienist?

Following your routine examination Dr. Deitsch will advise you if you require a visit to the hygienist. If you feel you wish to see the hygienist anyway, please contact the surgery and this can be arranged for you.

If you have any queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.



*Best wishes from
Adam Deitsch and all the staff at The Dental Centre.
Don't forget you can find us online at www.thedentalcentre.org*

