

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

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Issue 18, Autumn 2005

Welcome to the 18th 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 Autumn 2005 Newsletter. The leaves are off the trees, the Christmas countdown is well underway and Summer seems a distant memory.

We recently attended the country's largest dental exhibition - not everyone's idea of an exciting day out! It enabled us to see the latest materials and equipment. A few orders were placed and some more products are being investigated. Thus we are still making sure we are offering you the best and most up to date treatments available.

Remember, if there is anything you would like to see at the practice or if there is any way we can make your visit more pleasant, please let us know and we will try to oblige.



Christmas Opening

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre will be closed from Saturday 24th December 2005, reopening on Tuesday 3rd January 2006.

In an emergency please phone the practice for emergency information. Outside 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. To access the given options on our new answer phone, on some phones you might have to press the required option number while the message is still playing.



tooth is prepared to the proper shape for holding the filling.

- A thin resin is applied which treats the tooth surface and allows the filling material to bond on to the tooth. The strength of bonding is tremendously improved recently, and becomes so strong as to rival amalgam.

- Composite filling material is placed into the tooth.

- Composite material is hardened by shining intense blue light on it for a few seconds. This starts a chemical reaction in the filling and the composite is instantly hardened.

- The hardened filling is shaped and polished. The bite is adjusted so that all the teeth come together evenly.

[How long does it take to place a composite?](#)

Because a composite is more difficult to place than silver fillings, it takes longer to place. Placement time depends on the size and location of the cavity.

[How much do white fillings cost?](#)

The National Health Service will not usually allow white fillings on the biting surfaces of back teeth. However, this does not apply to the sides of back teeth or to any front teeth. Privately the cost of a white filling depends on the size and type of white filling used and the time it takes to complete the treatment. We will be able to give you an idea of the cost before you agree to treatment.

[Composite Fillings - Pros/Cons](#)

- Pros

The composite filling material contains acrylic and glass particles, no mercury. While there have been no conclusive studies relating the mercury in amalgam to any dangers, mercury by itself is very toxic.

The tooth coloured filling material looks more natural and aesthetically pleasing.

This type of filling material is already hard when you leave the surgery, therefore, you can chew on it whenever you like.

Composites bond to the tooth to support the remaining tooth structure,

Dental Hygienist

Donna, our dental hygienist is still at the practice, helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy.

There is information about the hygienist and what she does on the back of this newsletter.



April 2006

Dentists and dentistry have been in the news quite a lot recently. This is mainly due to changes in how the government pays dentists for the Health Service work we do. These changes are to come into force in April 2006. Over the next few weeks the practice will have to negotiate a contract with the local Primary Care Trust, which will decide our level of Health Service Funding. The Health Service is already grossly underfunded and initial indications are that the new changes will reduce this funding even more. Adam has been working within the National Health Service for over 15 years and for the foreseeable future aims to offer Health Service treatment as well as private treatment. However if we find that, due to lack of funding, it is not possible to offer an acceptable quality of treatment under the Health service, we will be forced to offer only private treatment.

So, in summary, The Rickmansworth Dental centre will still offer Health Service treatment alongside private treatment. Hopefully we will be able to do this for many years to come, but this may change in the future.

Of course we will keep you regularly updated on the situation.



Focus On White Fillings

In the past, teeth were most commonly repaired with amalgam (silver) fillings or gold restorations. Thanks to advances in modern dental materials and techniques, teeth can be restored with a more aesthetic and natural appearance using white fillings. The most simple form of white filling is technically called a *Composite*. A composite resin is a tooth-coloured plastic mixture filled with glass (silicon dioxide). Introduced in the 1960s, dental composites were confined to the front teeth because they were not strong enough to withstand the pressure and wear generated by the back teeth. Since then, composites have been significantly improved and can be successfully placed in the back teeth as well. Composites are not only used to restore decayed areas, but are also used for cosmetic improvements of the smile by changing the colour of the teeth or reshaping disfigured teeth.

[Procedure for white fillings](#)

- If necessary the tooth is numbed. Then the decay is removed and the



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which helps to prevent breakage and insulate the tooth from excessive temperature changes. The cavity size can be made smaller because of the ability of white fillings to bond to tooth. Thus less tooth structure is lost.

- **Cons**

The composite filling material is more expensive.

This type of filling usually takes the dentist a little longer to do.

Composite fillings can stain over a period of time depending on factors such as tea, coffee and tobacco use.

Composite fillings are strong on back teeth, but with very large fillings amalgam may be slightly stronger.

Your teeth may experience some degree of temperature sensitivity for a short while with a new filling.

Is it worth replacing my amalgam fillings with white ones?

Unless you are very unhappy or concerned about the metal fillings in your mouth, it is usually best to change fillings only when an old filling needs replacing. If so you can ask to have it replaced in a tooth-coloured material.

What are the treatment alternatives?

There are many ways to restore a tooth and white fillings are just one of the alternatives. Several factors influence the performance, durability, longevity and expense of dental restorations. These factors include: the components used in the filling material; where and how the filling is placed; the chewing load that the tooth will have to bear; and the length and number of visits needed to prepare and adjust the restored tooth.

The ultimate decision about what to use is best determined by the patient in consultation with the dentist. Before your treatment begins, we will discuss all the available treatment options.

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's 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.



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

