

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

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Welcome to the 19th 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 first newsletter of 2006. We all hope that you had a good festive season and are having a happy and healthy start to the New Year. A lot of things have been happening at The Dental Centre over the past few weeks. Some of these are discussed in this newsletter, so please read on.



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.

Goodbye & Hello

Goodbye and good luck to our nurse, Ayshea, who is leaving us to move up to Nottingham and a big welcome to our new nurse, Carla.



NHS Dentistry

As stated in our last newsletter, 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 under-funded 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.

Painless Injections

For many patients, the injection is the most dreaded part of the dental experience. Therefore to make the injections as comfortable as possible, we are trying out a new device from America, known as Vibraject. Vibraject is a small battery operated motor that attaches to a conventional syringe causing the needle to vibrate. The high vibration of the needle stimulates the nerve endings and blocks the transmission of pain feelings to the brain. This is known as the Gate Control Theory. We have been using this for a few weeks now and certainly the majority of patients are finding the injections less of an ordeal.



New Uniforms

If, on your next visit to The Dental Centre, you are wondering who the collection of fine-looking people are - no, It's not some models strayed from the Paris catwalks, it's just us in our new uniforms. We decided it was time to update the practice uniforms to something more modern, practical and hygienic. We hope you like the new look.



Appointments

We apologise if, when you make your next appointment, you have to wait slightly longer than normal for an appointment date. This is due to the new contract starting in April (see previous news). We have been recommended to try and complete all courses of treatment currently being undertaken, before the new contract starts on 1st April 2006. We apologise for this and any inconvenience caused. We will still make every effort to see you on the same day in an emergency.



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.



Focus On Fissure Sealants



What are fissure sealants?

A fissure sealant (also called a pit or dental sealant) is a plastic, professionally-applied material that is put on the chewing surfaces of back teeth to prevent cavities in children's teeth. Sealants provide a physical barrier so that cavity-causing bacteria cannot invade the pits and fissures on the chewing surfaces of teeth.

Why should my child get fissure sealants?

Since the early 1970s, childhood dental caries on smooth tooth surfaces (those without pits and fissures) has declined markedly because of widespread exposure to fluorides. By 1986-1987, approximately 90 percent of the decay in children's teeth occurred in tooth surfaces with pits and fissures, and almost two-thirds were found on the chewing surfaces alone. Fissure sealants have been shown to prevent decay on tooth surfaces with pits and fissures. Sealants have been approved for use for many years and are recommended by professional health associations and public health agencies.

Which teeth should be sealed?

Sealants are only applied to the back teeth. These are the teeth that have pits and fissures on their biting surfaces. Adam will tell you which teeth should be sealed after he has examined them, and checked whether the fissures are deep enough for sealing to help. Some teeth naturally form with deep grooves which will need to be sealed, others with shallow ones which will not need sealing.

When should my child get dental sealants?

Sealants cannot be placed on the deciduous (baby) teeth. The first adult molar teeth erupt at about 6 years old, sealants can be placed on these teeth once they are fully erupted. Sealants can then be placed on the molar and premolar teeth, if necessary, as they erupt.

What is involved?

The process is usually quick and straightforward taking only a few

minutes per tooth. The tooth is thoroughly cleaned, prepared with a special solution, and dried. The liquid sealant is then applied and allowed to set hard – usually by shining a blue light onto it. This light sets them to their full strength so they can be eaten on straight away.

Will my child feel it?

No, it is totally pain free, and the teeth do not feel any different afterwards.

How long do pit and fissure sealants last?

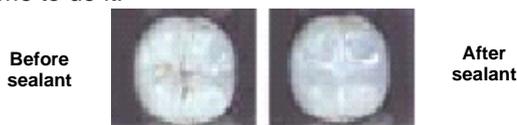
Sealants usually last for many years, but we will want to check them regularly to make sure that the seal is still intact. They can wear over time, and sometimes we need to add or replace some sealant to be sure that no decay can start underneath them.

Do my children still have to clean their teeth?

Yes. It is still vital that they do this. The smooth, sealed surface is now much easier to keep clean and healthy with normal toothbrushing. Using a fluoride toothpaste will also help to protect your children's teeth. Pit and fissure sealing reduces tooth decay and the number of fillings your child might need.

Whom do I ask about the treatment?

If you would like to know more about the treatment ask Adam or Donna. They will tell you if fissure sealing will help your children's teeth, and if it is the right time to do it.



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.



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

