



The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

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Welcome to the 21st 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 Summer 2006 newsletter. We hope that you are not overheating in the high temperatures. We've got all our fans working full power and, despite impending drought conditions, the water cooler is fully stocked, so hopefully your visit will be as comfortable as possible.

Just to remind you, we have now signed up to the new NHS contract. This has been covered in detail on previous newsletters which can be viewed online at www.thedentalcentre.org (follow the newsletters link).

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.

Happy Birthday To Us



We have just celebrated our 6th birthday at The Dental Centre. We have continually updated and improved all areas of the practice over the past six years to provide you with the best treatment possible. Hopefully we can continue to do this for many more years to come.

Dental Hygienist



We have a new hygienist at The Dental Centre. Imran is here all day Monday and Thursday. Initial reports from patients are very positive - apparently he is very gentle! Donna is still at the practice, helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy, but she has reduced her hours to one Saturday morning a month. There is information about hygienists and what they do on the back of this newsletter.

Holidays



With the holiday season upon us, a reminder that if Adam is away the practice will still be open and the phone manned during normal opening times. Arrangements will be made for patients with severe emergencies.

Outside normal working hours, including Bank Holidays, there is an emergency service available. The emergency out-of-hours telephone number has changed to **0845 603 1409**. This is now part of the NHS Direct service. Details can be found on the practice answer phone or online at www.thedentalcentre.org.

Focus On Oral Care Products



What do I need to clean my teeth properly?

There are many different oral care products available today. Adam or the hygienist will be able to recommend the best toothbrush and toothpaste for you to use, as well as the best way to clean your teeth and between your teeth. It is important to always use a good toothbrush, a toothpaste which is suitable for your needs and, in most cases, something to clean between your teeth.

Which is the best toothbrush to use?

It is usually recommended that adults should choose a toothbrush which is small to medium sized. The smaller the brush head the easier it is to get to the more tucked away parts of the mouth, however brushing can get fiddly with too small a brush. The brush should be multi-tufted with soft to medium filaments (bristles). These filaments should be round ended and made from nylon. This is important so that you do not damage your teeth or gums with any sharp bristles.

Are electric toothbrushes a good idea?

Some people prefer to use an electric toothbrush. This is especially useful if you have limited movement or find cleaning particularly difficult. These toothbrushes usually have heads which either vibrate or move round and round. Some brushes also use sonic waves to help dislodge plaque and debris. Electric toothbrushes have been proven to be at least 25% more effective than manual toothbrushes. Mains/rechargeable brushes are better than battery brushes as they provide more consistent brushing power.

What about children's toothbrushes?

It is just as important for children to use the correct oral hygiene products. Look for a small-headed toothbrush with soft nylon bristles suitable for the age of your child. There are many novelty toothbrushes for children, which may help encourage them to brush. Children can also use electric toothbrushes. Children need to be supervised with their tooth brushing until they are about 7 years old. It is important to make tooth brushing a routine and to stress the importance of oral hygiene and diet from an early age.

How often should I clean my teeth?

It is important to clean your teeth at least twice a day, especially last thing at night. In the morning teeth should be brushed before breakfast or about 30 minutes after

breakfast. Usually two minutes is enough to remove plaque and clean properly. Some people find using a stop-watch or timer useful as two minutes is often longer than you think.

What toothpastes are there?

There are several toothpastes available which are designed for different needs. Most people need a 'total care' toothpaste. Total care toothpastes are those that contain a number of ingredients to make them an effective multi-action toothpaste. They contain anti-bacterial agents and ingredients which help control plaque, dental decay and gum disease, while also freshening the breath.

If you have sensitive teeth, there are several toothpastes that contain 'desensitising agents' which do effectively reduce the pain of sensitive teeth and gums. Some people find rubbing this toothpaste along the affected area and leaving it on overnight helps ease the discomfort. There are toothpastes which claim to remove staining. They sometimes contain bicarbonate of soda which will help to remove any staining and dental plaque. These are often referred to as whitening toothpastes. It is important to realise that such toothpastes will only remove staining and will not change the natural colour of your teeth. If you feel you need to whiten your teeth, then speak Adam about how this could be done. If you are a smoker, you may find your teeth are more likely to be stained and you will therefore need more help. There are special smokers' toothpastes available, but they should be used with caution as they are usually very abrasive and long term use may damage the teeth. We can help by professionally cleaning your teeth regularly. If you prefer natural products, there are several toothpastes containing special mineral salts and plant extracts. They are made of only natural substances and flavouring. Some produce the products without animal testing and they are therefore suitable for vegetarians and vegans. It is always recommended that you use a toothpaste containing fluoride, which has been proven to reduce dental decay considerably.

Should my child use a fluoride toothpaste?

Yes. Fluoride has been proven to reduce dental decay by at least 40%, so all children should be encouraged to use a

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fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride may be in your drinking water depending where you live. Research has shown that children living in a non-fluoridated area have more dental decay than those living in areas with fluoride in the drinking water.

It is important to use only a small pea-sized amount of toothpaste for children, as they are likely to swallow some of it. For children under the age of six you can use a toothpaste with a lower level of fluoride.

What about cleaning between my teeth?

Brushing alone only cleans about 60% of the surface of your teeth, so it is therefore important that you also clean between your teeth every time you brush. The most common way to clean between teeth is with dental floss or tape. Many people prefer tape to floss, as it is wider and can be gentler on the gums. There are several different types of floss or tape, including mint-flavoured, wax-coated and those containing fluoride. To clean the small gaps between your teeth you can also use special interdental brushes. Ask us for advice on how to use these products correctly and safely. If you prefer to use toothpicks or dental sticks be gentle with them as they can easily traumatise the gums. If you have bridgework, you may get food and plaque trapped under it. Floss threaders may help guide the floss under the bridge. Some floss (Superfloss) has a thicker spongy centre which may also help to clean under the bridge and gum area effectively.

Should I use a mouthwash?

Tooth brushing and cleaning between the teeth are the most important ways of keeping the mouth clean, many people also use a mouthwash as part of their daily oral health routine. They are usually used to help freshen breath, but they also help to dislodge any food debris. Some mouthwashes contain an anti bacterial agent to help reduce gum disease and to control plaque. Mouthwashes containing Chlorhexidine (eg.Corsodyl), are particularly effective at treating gum infections and other oral problems, such as those following a dental extraction. These mouthwashes must be used in moderation and not used over a long period of time. This is because they can cause staining, although this can be easily removed by the dental hygienist. Make sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions at all times. If you are prone to decay, regular use of a fluoride mouthwash (eg.Fluoriguard) will help strengthen the teeth and reduce decay.

If you require any more information or advice, please do not hesitate to ask any of the team at The Dental Centre,

Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Imran, our new hygienist, is here on Mondays and Thursdays. Donna Does one Saturday morning a month.

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.

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

