

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

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Issue 22, Autumn 2006

Welcome to the 22nd 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 2006 Newsletter. We hope you had a good summer and not getting too stressed as the Christmas countdown has well and truly started. Some sad news about our vibrating injection system (the Vibraject - see Newsletter 19). It was proving a great success, making injections almost painless, however we must have over used it as it has now stopped working! It has to go back to America for repair, but will hopefully be up and buzzing again very soon.

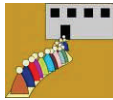


Normally we focus on a different topic each newsletter, but as it is oral cancer awareness week from the 12th to 18th November, we have chosen this as our topic again.

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.

NHS Patients

Due to a sharp increase in patients wishing to make appointments, we have currently stopped taking new NHS patients. We are taking new patient details and placing them on a waiting list. Hopefully in the very near future we will reopen our appointment book to new NHS patients and will contact those on the waiting list.



To try and reduce the number of wasted appointments, when patients fail to turn up, we are warning patients who miss two or more appointments (without cancelling first) that they may be refused any further appointments at the practice.

Christmas Opening

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre will be closed from Saturday 23rd December 2006, reopening on Tuesday 2nd January 2007.



During this time and 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.

Antibiotic Cover

Due to a recent change in recommendations, we are now asking all patients who need to take antibiotic cover, to come in an hour before their appointment and take their antibiotics in the practice. This is not because we don't trust you to take the medication, but there is a very small chance of an allergic reaction to the antibiotic and we have the equipment at the practice to deal with a problem should it arise. We are sorry if this causes any inconvenience, but it is for your own well being that these recommendations are being implemented. If you require any further information or advice, please do not hesitate to phone The Dental Centre.



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.



Focus On Mouth Cancer

During your routine dental examination many patients seem slightly bemused when Adam asks you to stick your tongue out. This is because Dr. Deitsch not only checks your teeth, but also all the oral tissues to make sure everything is healthy. One of the things he is looking for is oral or mouth cancer.

What is mouth cancer?

Most people have heard of cancer affecting parts of the body such as the lungs or breasts. However, cancer can occur in the mouth, where the disease can affect the lips, tongue, cheeks and throat.

Who can be affected by mouth cancer?

Anyone can be affected by mouth cancer, whether they have their own teeth or not. Mouth cancers are more common in people over 40, particularly men. However, research has shown that mouth cancer is becoming more common in younger patients and in women. There are, on average, over 4,300 new cases of mouth cancer diagnosed in the UK each year. The number of new cases of mouth cancer is on the increase.

Do people die from mouth cancer?

Yes. Nearly 1,700 people in the UK die

from mouth cancer every year. Many of these deaths could be prevented if the cancer was caught early enough. As it is, people with mouth cancer are more likely to die than those having cervical cancer or melanoma skin cancer.

What can cause mouth cancer?

Most cases of mouth cancer are linked to tobacco and alcohol. Cigarette, cigar and pipe smoking are the main forms of tobacco use in the UK. However, the traditional ethnic habits of chewing tobacco, betel quid, gutkha and paan are particularly dangerous. Alcohol increases the risk of mouth cancer, and if tobacco and alcohol are consumed together the risk is even greater. Over-exposure to sunlight can also increase the risk of cancer of the lips.

What are the signs of mouth cancer?

Mouth cancer can appear in different forms and can affect all parts of the mouth, tongue and lips. Mouth cancer can appear as a painless mouth ulcer that does not heal normally. A white or red patch in the mouth can also develop into a cancer. It is important to visit your dentist if these areas do not heal within two weeks.

How can mouth cancer be detected early?

Mouth cancer can often be spotted in its early stages by your dentist during a thorough mouth examination. If mouth cancer is recognised early, then the chances of a cure are good. Many people with mouth cancer go to their dentist or doctor too late.

What is involved in a full check-up of the mouth?

The dentist examines the inside of your mouth and your tongue with the help of a small mirror. Remember, your dentist is able to see parts of your mouth that you cannot see easily yourself.

What happens if my dentist finds a problem?

If your dentist finds something unusual or abnormal they will refer you to a consultant at the local hospital, who will carry out a thorough examination of your mouth and throat. A small sample of the cells may be gathered from the area (a biopsy), and these cells will be examined under the microscope to see what is wrong.

What happens next?

If the cells are cancerous, more tests will be carried out. These may include overall health checks, blood tests, x-rays or scans. These tests will decide what



course of treatment is needed.

Can mouth cancer be treated?

If mouth cancer is spotted early, the chances of a complete cure are good, and the smaller the area or ulcer the better the chance of a cure. However, too many people come forward too late, because they do not visit their dentist for regular examinations.

How can I make sure that my mouth stays healthy?

- It is important to visit your dentist at least once a year, even if you wear dentures. This is especially important if you smoke and drink alcohol.
- When brushing your teeth, look out for any changes in your mouth, and report any red or white patches, or ulcers, that have not cleared up within two weeks.
- When exposed to the sun, be sure to use a good protective sun cream, and put the correct type of barrier cream on your lips.
- A good diet, rich in vitamins A, C and E, provides protection against the development of mouth cancer. Plenty of fruit and vegetables help the body to protect itself, in general, from most cancers.
- Cut down on your smoking and drinking.

Remember, regular visits to your dentist could save your life. **If in doubt, get checked out!**

This is just a very brief summary of a very serious topic. More information can be found at The British Dental Health Foundation website at www.mouthcancer.org. Other useful websites on this topic are www.mouthcancerfoundation.org and www.oralcancerfoundation.org.



Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Imran, our new hygienist, is here on Mondays and Thursdays. Donna works 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 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.



*Hope you have a good Autumn.
With 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*

