

# The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

tel/fax: 01923 777450

e-mail: [dentist@thedentalcentre.org](mailto:dentist@thedentalcentre.org)

Issue 24, Spring 2007

Welcome to the 24<sup>th</sup> 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 2007 Newsletter. We hope you had a good Winter and managed to avoid the plethora of nasty bugs that were doing the rounds. With the evenings getting brighter, Summer is only just around the corner. From 1st of July 2007 virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England will become smokefree. Therefore in this issue of The Dental Centre newsletter we have focused on smoking and oral health. Hopefully, by seeing the harm smoking can do in your mouth, the smokers reading this may be persuaded to try and stop. A few tips have been included to help with this.

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.

## Practice Refurbishment



A while ago, we mentioned plans to refurbish and update the surgeries at The Dental Centre. These plans were put on hold, because of the uncertainty with the new dental contracts. Now that 'the dust has settled', we are going ahead with our plans this Summer. Firstly we will be updating the hygienist's surgery and then Adam's surgery. We have been reassured by the contractors that there should be minimal disruption and we are hoping to provide our normal service. In the near future a section will be added to the practice website to keep you informed on the progress of the refurbishment.

## Dental Hygienist



Imran, our hygienist, has been with us almost a year now. He is here all day Monday and Thursday. 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.

## Smile!

It takes 43 muscles to frown, but only 17 muscles to smile. That makes it 2.5 times easier to smile!



## Focus On Smoking And Oral Health



Most people are now aware that smoking is bad for your health. It can cause many different medical problems and, in some cases, fatal diseases. However, many people don't realise the damage that smoking does to their mouth, gums and teeth. While the effects of smoking on your lungs, heart and other organs are not visible to the naked eye, the dentist or hygienist can easily see the evidence in your mouth. Smokers can expect to develop some combination of the following, depending on the amount and length of time they have smoked:

### • Oral cancers

Tobacco has a direct carcinogenic effect on the cells of the mouth. The death rate from oral cancers (which includes cancers of the tongue, mouth, gums, tonsils and pharynx) exceed the death rate from cervical cancer. For more information on oral cancer see our Autumn 2006 newsletter (issue 22) online at [www.thedentalcentre.org](http://www.thedentalcentre.org).

### • Oral Infections

Smoking is also associated with many other disorders and infections in and around the mouth. The diseases most commonly associated with smoking include: Mouth ulcers, Chronic sinus infections, oral candidal infections (Thrush), Smokers palate (inflammation of the roof of the mouth), Smoker's melanosis (brown patches) and Lichen Planus (white patches)

### • Discoloured teeth

Tobacco stains and discolours teeth, dentures and restorations.

### • Persistent bad breath

Tobacco, whether smoked or chewed, can cause halitosis.

### • An increase of calculus (tartar) build-up

Calculus deposits make it easier for plaque to stick to teeth and cause gum disease and cavities to form.

### • Periodontal (gum and bone) disease.

Smoking is a significant risk factor for gum disease. Tobacco reduces blood flow to the gums, depriving them of oxygen and nutrients that allow gums to stay healthy,

and leaving them vulnerable to bacterial infection. According to one recent study, cigarette smoking may play a major role in more than half the cases of severe gum disease in adults. Current smokers were about four times more likely to have periodontitis than people who had never smoked. If unchecked, periodontal disease can lead to complete destruction of the tooth's supporting tissues, abscesses and, ultimately, loss of the tooth. As the gums recede with gum disease, the exposed root of the tooth is more prone to decay. Gum disease has also been associated with heart disease (see our last newsletter online at [www.thedentalcentre.org](http://www.thedentalcentre.org)).

### • Hairy tongue

This brown, furry growth on the surface of tongue traps germs and eventually creates a burning sensation on the tongue and exacerbates bad breath.

### • Smoker's lip

This is created by cigarette burns to the lip.

### • Altered sense of taste and smell

The smell and taste functions of smokers can be acutely affected by the gasses and chemicals within tobacco.

### • Delayed wound healing

Tobacco reduces the blood flow in the mouth which influences the rate at which wounds heal within the mouth. Consequently healing is much slower and not as successful following oral surgery on smokers.

### • Failure of dental implants

Tobacco can be damaging to both the initial and long-term success of dental implants. Indeed, in one study smoking was the most significant factor predisposing to implant failure.

## Stopping Smoking

The most important step that smokers need to take to improve their oral health and minimise the risk of oral cancer is to stop smoking. Men and Women of all ages experience major and immediate health benefits when they stop smoking. Ex-smokers have a decreased risk of heart disease, respiratory illnesses, strokes and many cancers. In fact, after 15 years, an ex-smoker's risk of death is similar to that of a person who has never smoked. Stopping tobacco use is very difficult, since it is an addiction. Here are some tips to help get you started:

**Continued Overleaf**

Begin by figuring out why and when you smoke. That's the first step to stopping for good. In order to succeed, you must convince yourself that you really want to stop smoking. There are two ways to stop smoking: going 'cold turkey' or tapering off slowly. Whichever way you choose, pick a memorable date to stop, preferably during a time of low stress. Get plenty of exercise. If you have been a heavy smoker, the use of nicotine patches or gum may be advisable. Medications are also available. Contact your pharmacist or doctor for further information. Don't be discouraged! On average it takes about five attempts to successfully stop smoking. Each relapse brings you one step closer to stopping for good.

The Four D's:

Drink Water - Water with crushed ice helps flush nicotine out of your system faster and helps satisfy oral cravings.

Deep Breathing - Take a "deep breath break" instead of a cigarette break - Take 10 deep breaths and hold the last one while lighting a match. Exhale slowly, and blow out the match.

Delay- Each day, delay lighting your first cigarette by one hour. When you have your next craving, delay for another 15 or 30 minutes. Now YOU will be in control.

Do Something Different - When you have a craving, change your activity. Get out of the situation that makes you want to smoke.

Evidence shows you are more likely to stop smoking for good if you get the right support. This support is available free of charge through the NHS. For more information call the NHS smoking helpline on **0800 169 0 169** or visit **www.gosmokefree.co.uk**.

### Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Imran 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'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.



*Hope you have a good Spring.  
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](http://www.thedentalcentre.org)*

