



# The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Welcome to the 26<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 Autumn 2007 Newsletter. We hope you are well. We start with the news that Pam, our receptionist, has retired and moved to South Africa. After her many years here, it feels very strange to not have her around. I'm sure I speak on behalf of many of you, in wishing her a long, happy and healthy retirement. Her big red chair has been very ably filled by our senior nurse, Santok, who has now moved downstairs to the reception. Her position has been filled by our new nurse, Ashleigh. A big welcome to her to the practice.

Many congratulations to Imran, our hygienist, and his wife, Sadia on the birth of a son. We hope they start getting some more sleep soon!

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.

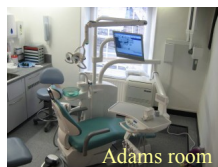


## Practice Refurbishment

On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2007, we started a major refurbishment of the two surgeries at The Dental Centre. Work began on the Hygienist's Room and then on to Adam's Surgery. It took about two weeks to complete.



Hygienist's room



Adam's room

There are new dental chairs and treatment centres in both rooms. Adam's room also has a new layout with new cabinetry. We have also upgraded the smaller equipment to some of the most up to date available. So you can be sure that you are receiving treatment in modern, hygienic surroundings. All at The Dental Centre would like to apologise for any disruption or inconvenience the refurbishment may have caused. Hopefully you will like the changes. More information on the refurbishment can be found on our website.

## Dental Hygienist

Both our hygienists are still at the practice, helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy. Imran is here all day Monday and Thursday. Donna is here one Saturday morning a month. There is information about hygienists and what they do on the back of this newsletter.



## Christmas Opening

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre will be closed from Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2007, reopening on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2008. 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](http://www.thedentalcentre.org).



## Mouth Cancer

Just a reminder that it is Mouth Cancer Awareness Week from 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

Mouth cancer is a condition that can affect the lips, tongue, cheeks and throat. It kills one person every five hours in the UK and the number of new cases is rising faster than almost any other cancer. Look out for any changes including ulcers that haven't healed after three weeks, lumps, or any red or white patches in the mouth. If you have any concerns then visit us immediately.

Remember: **If in doubt, get checked out!**



More information can be found online at [www.mouthcancer.org](http://www.mouthcancer.org).

## Focus On Tooth Decay

Tooth decay is also known as dental caries. It results in a cavity in the tooth and if untreated can spread from the enamel (the hard outer covering of the tooth) into the softer dentine inside. The decay can progress more rapidly in the softer dentine and will eventually reach the dental pulp (nerve and blood vessels) in the centre of the tooth and cause this to become infected and inflamed. Once the pulp is infected it may die and bacteria can breed in the empty pulp chamber pushing beyond the end of the tooth root to form a dental abscess.

### Causes

Tooth decay is caused by the bacteria in dental plaque breaking down sugar in the foods and drinks that you eat and drink. Dental plaque is a sticky film that is constantly forming on your teeth. It contains many bacteria, some of which react with sugar (fermentable carbohydrates) in the foods which we eat and drink to form acid. This acid starts to break down the hard

structure of the enamel. Once the sugary foods have gone from the mouth salts from your saliva act to repair the damaged enamel. This process takes around 40 minutes to complete. Dental decay results as a result of many thousand of these acid attacks when the balance is in favour of the acid breaking down the tooth rather than the saliva repairing it. It is important to cut down the number of times you have sugary food and drink. As a nation our diet has changed from three square meals a day to 7-20 snacks and this has led to an increase in the number of times the teeth come under acid attack and an increase in decay. It is important to avoid constantly snacking on sugary foods or sipping fizzy drinks. A very small number of people who do not look after their teeth appear to be immune to dental decay, but most people who do not keep up a good oral hygiene routine will eventually get decay in some or most of their teeth.

### Symptoms

In the early stages of dental decay there may be no symptoms but the dentist may be able to detect an early cavity through examination and x-ray. It is for this reason that you should visit the dentist regularly as small cavities are much easier to treat than advanced decay. Once the cavity has reached the dentine you may notice sensitivity, particularly with sweet foods and drinks, acidic or hot foods. As the decay nears the dental pulp you may suffer from toothache. If the toothache is brought on by hot or sweet foods this may last for only a few minutes. As the decay gets closer to the dental pulp the pain may become more persistent. Toothache is a symptom indicating that something is wrong, probably with one or more teeth. Neglect will usually make matters worse, and a tooth may possibly be lost that could otherwise have been saved.

Toothache is a sign that you should visit a dentist.

### Diagnosis

This is based on the patients' symptoms, a physical examination by a dentist and X-rays of the teeth.



### Types of cavities

- Pit and fissure cavities, which form in the deep pits and grooves on the chewing and biting surfaces of the back teeth. This is the type of decay most likely to occur in children and can be reduced by applying fissure sealants to the back teeth.
- Smooth-surface cavities, which form on the sides of teeth, including between the teeth.

•Root cavities, which form on the root and can extend below the gum line. Root decay is less common than decay in other parts of the tooth and tends to occur more in the elderly where the root surface becomes exposed. However, root decay is more likely to damage the tooth pulp.

•Recurrent or secondary cavities, which form where you already had a cavity or filling.

#### Treatment

When tooth decay is mild, the area of decay is small and has not pierced the tooth surface. You can sometimes stop the decay by improving your dental hygiene and using fluoride mouthwashes.

When tooth decay gets worse, a cavity forms. You will need a filling to stop the decay and prevent more damage.

Tooth decay is treated by drilling out all the decayed matter and filling the cavity. In advanced cases of dental decay where the dental pulp is affected or a dental abscess has been formed, it may be necessary to carry out a root filling on the tooth or even to remove the tooth.

#### Prevention

Prevention is more effective than cure and careful oral hygiene and home care can prevent cavities forming. Regular visits to the dentist will ensure that any problems are caught early and are easy to treat. Tooth decay can be prevented by practising good oral hygiene. This includes brushing your teeth at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and cleaning in between your teeth with dental floss or interdental brushes daily. This removes the plaque that is forming constantly on your teeth and reduces the likelihood of acid attack. Cut down on the amount of sugary foods and drinks to reduce the number of times your teeth are subjected to acid attack. Chewing sugar free gum for ten minutes after a meal increases the saliva flow and helps to neutralise any acids which have been formed as a result of eating sugary foods.

The dentist may also advise you to visit the dental hygienist who can remove plaque build-up and calculus from your teeth and show you the best ways to keep your teeth clean and healthy.

Further information on toothbrushing, fluoride, dietary advice and other related topics can be found in previous newsletters which can be read online at [www.thedentalcentre.org](http://www.thedentalcentre.org).

### 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 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](http://www.thedentalcentre.org)*

