

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

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Issue 28, Spring 2008

Welcome to the 28th 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 2008 Newsletter. It's nice to have the light evenings and warmer weather after the winter. Hopefully we are heading towards a long, hot summer. Improvements and upgrades have continued at The Dental Centre. Our main acquisition has been a new air compressor. Tucked away under the stairs, the compressor supplies all the air that goes to the surgeries and helps run the equipment. The new unit is the top of the range model supplying dried, oil-free pure air. This exceeds all the latest EU directives and insures you are still receiving clean, uncontaminated air during your treatment.

Just to remind you, we are still providing NHS treatment, but our waiting list for new patients is growing very long. New patients will have to attend on a private basis if they wish to be seen sooner.

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.



Tooth Whitening

We have just received our latest shipment of Sapphire whitening kits from America (it is not available in this country). The Manufacturers are now recommending that the whitening gel need only be used for 3 minutes(!) a day for 14 days. Compared to other whitening systems that need to be used overnight, this new system will make it much more convenient and easy to get a brighter smile.

Further information can be obtained from The Dental Centre or online at the practice website.



Crowns

Recent stories in the press have reported on crowns for teeth (also known as caps) coming from china and containing lead. All of the crowns fitted at The Dental Centre are made in the exotic suburbs of Hemel Hempstead and are guaranteed lead-free.



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.



Antibiotic Cover

In March The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommended that antibiotic prophylaxis for infective endocarditis was no longer necessary. This means that patients who used to have to take antibiotics an hour before their appointment no longer have to.

More information can be found on the NICE website (<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=11938>).

Three documents issued by NICE, explaining and giving the reasons for this decision, have also been placed on The Dental Centre's website (www.thedentalcentre.org). Just follow the 'Antibiotic Cover' links. Please do not hesitate to contact The Dental Centre if you require any further advice.



National Smile Month

National Smile Month 2008 is running simultaneously in the UK and USA between 18th May and 17th June.

Launched under the tagline 'Brush for Health', planned events and a media campaign hope to raise awareness of the systemic links between oral health and overall body health - focusing on the relationship between gum disease and serious general health conditions like heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes and low birth weight babies. Some of these topics have been covered in previous Dental Centre Newsletters, available online at www.thedentalcentre.org



Focus On Dental Examinations

When you receive your reminder for your routine dental check up, you may wonder why you should make an appointment and what occurs during the dental examination. It is important for you to have regular dental examinations, so that we can help you to maintain a healthy mouth and also check for any early signs of dental problems, such as decay or gum disease.



This will enable us to rectify the problem early before it gets too advanced and requires more complicated treatment.

At the start of the check up Adam will check your medical history. If there have been any new illnesses or medications, please let him know, in case it has some affect on your treatment. If you are having any problems or have any concerns with your mouth, please let us know. It may be helpful to note down any problems or questions before the appointment as they may be forgotten in the heat of the moment! If you are feeling nervous please let us know as we can help you relax. After the initial consultation we are ready to sit you back and examine your mouth. Firstly we check your teeth for cavities and broken fillings or crowns. Dental decay may appear as a hole or sometimes as a dark shadow underneath the surface of the hard enamel coating of the tooth. The occlusion or bite of the teeth (how teeth of the upper and lower jaws fit together) is then assessed. This may indicate a need for treatment for bruxism (grinding the teeth) or malocclusion (e.g. braces).

Adam will then check the gums and your general oral hygiene to ensure there are no problems. He may use a special probe to test the depth of the pockets (the gap between the tooth and the gum) around your teeth in order to detect gum disease. Next the soft tissues (e.g., tongue, cheeks, inner and outer lips, floor and palate of the mouth) are checked. This is done by a visual inspection of the inside of the mouth to identify any sores, swelling, growths or other abnormalities that may indicate health problems, such as infection or oral cancer. This is why Adam gets you to stick your tongue out at him, which amuses many patients. There is also a check of the head and neck area. This may include visual examination of the face, neck and lips for swelling, bleeding or other abnormalities.

Additional areas examined may include:

The jaw or Temporomandibular joint (TMJ), where the lower jaw connects to the skull. A dentist may ask patients to open and close their mouths, or move their lower jaw from side to side. Pain or tenderness in the area may indicate a problem, such as TMJ disorder.

Salivary glands. These glands, located below the tongue and around the jaw, may be observed and felt by hand for inflammation that may indicate infection

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or disease.

Lymph nodes in the neck. This area may also be checked by Adam to find any signs of infection or disease.

We may then take radiographs if necessary. Usually two small radiographs of your back teeth are taken every two to three years or more regularly if you are prone to problems. These show any hidden decay between the teeth and the level of the bone which may show gum disease. Other x-rays may be taken to give a close up of any problem areas.

When the examination is complete, Adam will discuss the findings with you and offer any relevant advice. Emergency treatment, small restorations or a basic clean of the teeth may be able to be done after the examination. A further appointment with Adam, the hygienist or even a referral to a specialist might have to be arranged after the examination.

Finally we will recommend a date for your next visit. The time to your next check-up could be as short as 3 months or as long as 2 years – or up to 1 year if you are under 18. Generally speaking, the lower your risk of dental problems, the longer it will be before your next check-up. This may vary at different times of your life depending on the condition of your teeth, gums and mouth or other changes in your health or lifestyle.

Some full denture wearers assume that because they have no teeth they don't need see a dentist. With increasing age the chance of oral cancers or other lesions forming within the mouth increases and it is therefore important for us to check this. Dentures will also become loose with age due to the bone shrinking and may need replacing or the fitting surface relining. Therefore we recommend that patients with full dentures attend every two years.

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 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 can carry out this type of work. However, the hygienist has also 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 Relaxing Spring.
With Best Wishes from Adam Deitsch and all the staff at The Dental
Centre. Don't forget you can find us online at*

