



The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Welcome to the 31st 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 Winter 2009 Newsletter. Everyone at the dental centre hopes you had a great Christmas and are having a happy and healthy New Year.

We hope you have thawed out following the big freeze. We apologise for having to cancel and rearrange some appointments at very short notice and hope we did not cause too much inconvenience.

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.

Welcome Home



After a year in South Africa, we are delighted

to welcome our past receptionist, Pam, back to the area. Some of you who have contacted us recently may well have found her manning the phones, as she is helping us out while Santok, our current receptionist, is on extended compassionate leave. Our thoughts are with Santok at this time.

Mouthwash



There have been some reports in the press recently about the potential health risks associated with dental mouthwashes.

To clarify the situation, there is a theoretical risk with the alcohol present in some mouthwashes. This is only theoretical and there is no actual evidence of any damage to health. The majority of mouthwashes are available in alcohol-free varieties. These are recommended for children and those wishing to avoid alcohol.

Adam or one of the practice hygienists will be happy to give advice on any oral care products.

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. He now also does occasional Tuesdays. Our receptionist can inform you of these when booking an appointment. Donna is here one Saturday morning a month. There is information about hygienists and what they do on the back of this newsletter.

Thank You



Adam and all the team would like to thank everyone for the cards and generous gifts given over the Christmas period.

Tonight Programme



Some of you may have recently seen the Tonight programme on ITV, concerning the controversy surrounding dental amalgam fillings. Unfortunately this programme was sensationalist journalism at its worst, providing very few facts and giving a very biased view.

We recently covered this topic in one of the Dental Centre newsletters. If you follow the "Read Our Newsletter" link at www.thedentalcentre.org and click on "Issue 29, Summer 2008 (Focus on Dental Amalgam)", towards the bottom of the list of newsletters, you will hopefully get a more informative and balanced review of the topic.

Of course, if you have any worries or concerns about any aspect of your treatment, please do not hesitate to talk to Adam or any of the staff at The Dental Centre.

Focus On Dental Erosion



Erosion is the loss of tooth enamel caused by acid attack. Enamel is the hard, protective coating of the tooth, which protects the sensitive dentine underneath. Tooth erosion differs from tooth decay. Tooth decay is the progressive loss of tooth enamel by acid-producing bacteria in dental plaque. Bacteria in the mouth break down sugars into acids which then attack the teeth. Erosion is caused by direct acid attack and is independent of the bacteria in the mouth. However, due to loss of the protective outer coating of the teeth, eroded teeth can also be more likely to suffer decay. The source of acid that causes the erosion is either from an intrinsic source from within the body (e.g. acid from the stomach) or from an extrinsic source from outside the body (e.g. acidic foods, drinks or medicines). Intrinsic causes include the medical condition bulimia, where patients make themselves sick so that they lose weight. Because there are high levels of acid in

the vomit, this can cause damage to tooth enamel. Acids produced by the stomach can come up into the mouth (this is called gastro-oesophageal reflux). People suffering from Hiatus hernia and other oesophageal problems, or who drink too much alcohol, may also find they suffer from dental erosion due to vomiting. Extrinsic sources include acidic foods and drinks. Fruit and fruit juices, particularly citric ones including lemon and orange, can be particularly harmful to teeth. Fruit juices and fruits contain natural acids, which can be just as harmful to teeth. Fizzy drinks are also a cause of enamel erosion. It is important to remember that even the diet brands are still as harmful. Even flavoured fizzy waters can have an effect if taken in large amounts, as they contain certain acids which can harm the teeth. Some people who work in acidic environments, e.g. using lead acid batteries, or wine tasters, may also develop erosion.

A significant proportion of people have some erosion of their tooth enamel, particularly on the front teeth, which are most commonly exposed to acids from drinks. Children are particularly at risk as they are the biggest drinkers of soft and carbonated drinks.

Mild erosion may be symptomless. More advanced erosion can show up as hollows in the teeth and a general wearing away of the tooth surface and biting edges. This can expose the dentine underneath, which is a darker, yellower colour than the enamel. Because the dentine is sensitive your teeth can also be more sensitive to hot, cold or sweet foods and drinks.



Erosion on the front teeth from an extrinsic source.



Erosion on the inside surface of the teeth from an intrinsic source

To reduce erosion:

Limit acidic products and fizzy drinks to mealtimes to reduce the number of acid attacks on your teeth. • Drinks should be drunk quickly without holding in or 'swishing' around your mouth. Or use a straw to help drinks go to the back of your mouth and avoid long contact with your teeth. • Finish a meal with cheese or milk as this will help neutralise the acid. • Chew sugar-free gum after eating to help produce more saliva to help cancel out the acids which form in your mouth after eating. • Wait for at least one hour after eating or drinking anything acidic before brushing your teeth. This gives your teeth time to build up their mineral content again. • Brush your teeth twice a day with a small-headed brush with medium to soft bristles and fluoride toothpaste. If there is a medical reason for excess acid in the mouth this may require treatment from the doctor.

If we identify erosion of your teeth, it is important to pinpoint the causes and advise you how to prevent further damage. Dental erosion does not always need to be treated. With regular check ups we can monitor the problem and make sure it is not getting any worse. Sensitivity can be treated by the use of antisensitivity toothpastes and varnishes. Fluoride mouthwashes can also help. In more advanced cases it is important to protect the tooth and the dentine underneath to prevent tooth decay and sensitivity. In these cases, simply bonding a filling onto the tooth will be enough to repair it. However in more severe cases more advanced restorative procedures may be required.

For more information about healthy eating for teeth and sensitive teeth, please read our past newsletters on line at www.thedentalcentre.org.

Please remember if you have any concerns about your dental health Adam and all the team at The Dental Centre, will be happy to answer any queries you may have.

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 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?

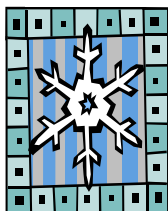
You can do a great deal to help yourself and the hygienist as you are in control of your mouth between visits to the practice.

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 warm Winter.
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*

