



The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Welcome to the 38th 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 2010 Newsletter. We hope you are keeping well and managing to avoid the plethora of coughs and colds which seem to be around at the moment. In our last newsletter, we mentioned problems with our water cooler supplier. We have arranged a new supplier, so on your next visit the new water cooler should be up and running. Behind the scenes, we are currently updating and improving all our cleaning and sterilising equipment - more about that in our next newsletter. 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.

Missed Appointments



We are exceedingly busy at The Dental Centre at the moment. Unfortunately some patients do not show up for their appointments or cancel at the very last moment, so that we are unable to fill the appointment slot. Previously we have been quite relaxed about this. However, to avoid wasted appointments, we may be forced to ask patients who regularly miss appointments or cancel without sufficient notice, to seek treatment elsewhere.

Feedback



At The Dental Centre we are constantly striving to give you the best possible experience each time you visit. In order to find out what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong and where things can be improved, we would like to have your feedback. To help with this we have placed a suggestion box in the waiting room and will be distributing questionnaires relating to the service we are providing. Of course, if you wish to discuss any aspect of your visit with us, please do not hesitate to approach us at The Dental Centre.

Dental Hygienist



We have two hygienists at the practice, helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy. Kate is here all day Monday and Thursday. Donna is here one Saturday morning a month. If you wish to book a session with the hygienist at the same time you have your routine visit with Adam, just let Pam know. There is information about hygienists and what they do on the back of this newsletter.

Mouth Cancer



Just a reminder that it is Mouth Cancer Action Month from 1st to 30th November 2010.



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 contact us immediately. Remember: **If in doubt, get checked out!**

More information is available online at www.mouthcancer.org/public



SMS Text Service



We have upgraded our practice software and are now trialling an SMS text service. This gives us the ability to send appointment reminders and other information via text messages to your mobile phone. Please let us know if this is something you would be interested in.

Christmas Opening



Please contact The Dental Centre for confirmation of our opening times during the Christmas and New Year period. Rest assured that if we are closed and you are having problems, there is an emergency service available. The emergency out-of-hours telephone number is **0845 603 1409**. This is part of the NHS Direct service. Details can be found on the practice answer phone or online at www.thedentalcentre.org. Hopefully you will not have any problems, but our website has a section on dental emergencies, which you might find useful.

Football Update



The Rickmansworth Dental Centre is proud sponsor of the Under 12's Medburn Squad in the Excel Sunday League. They've had a mixed start to the season, but are starting to gel as a team and results are getting better. So the rest of the season should be quite exciting! Watch this space for updates.

Focus On Taste Disorders



If you experience a taste problem, it is important to remember that you are not alone. More than 200,000 people visit a doctor for such a chemosensory problem each year. Many more taste disorders go unreported.

Many people who have taste disorders also notice problems with their sense of smell.

How does our sense of taste work?

Taste belongs to our chemical sensing system, or the chemosenses. The complex process of tasting begins when tiny molecules released by the substances around us stimulate special cells in the nose, mouth, or throat. These special sensory cells transmit messages through nerves to the brain, where specific tastes are identified.

Gustatory or taste cells react to food and beverages. These surface cells in the mouth send taste information to their nerve fibres. The taste cells are clustered in the taste buds of the mouth, tongue, and throat. Many of the small bumps that can be seen on the tongue contain taste buds.

Another chemosensory mechanism, called the common chemical sense, contributes to appreciation of food flavour. In this system, thousands of nerve endings--especially on the moist surfaces of the eyes, nose, mouth, and throat--give rise to sensations like the sting of ammonia, the coolness of menthol, and the irritation of chilli peppers.

We can commonly identify at least five different taste sensations: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami (the savoury taste elicited by glutamate, which is found in chicken broth, meat extracts, and some cheeses). In the mouth, these tastes, along with texture, temperature, and the sensations from the common chemical sense, combine with odours to produce a perception of flavour. It is flavour that lets us know whether we are eating a pear or an apple. Some people are surprised to learn that flavours are recognized mainly through the sense of smell. If you hold your nose while eating chocolate, for example, you will have trouble identifying the chocolate flavour--even though you can distinguish the food's sweetness or bitterness. That is because the distinguishing characteristic of chocolate, for example, what differentiates it from caramel, is sensed largely by its odour.

What are the taste disorders?

The most common true taste complaint is phantom taste perceptions. Additionally, testing may demonstrate a reduced ability to taste sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami, which is called hypogeusia. Some people can detect no tastes, called ageusia. True taste loss is rare; perceived loss usually reflects a smell loss, which is often confused with a taste loss. In other disorders of the chemical

senses, the system may misread and or distort an odour, a taste, or a flavour. Or a person may detect a foul taste from a substance that is normally pleasant tasting.

What causes taste disorders?

Some people are born with chemosensory disorders, but most develop them after an injury or illness. Upper respiratory infections are blamed for some chemosensory losses, and injury to the head can also cause taste problems. Loss of taste can also be caused by exposure to certain chemicals such as insecticides and by some medicines. Taste disorders may result from oral health problems and some surgeries (e.g. third molar extraction and middle ear surgery). Many patients who receive radiation therapy for cancers of the head and neck develop chemosensory disorders.

How are taste disorders diagnosed?

The extent of a chemosensory disorder can be determined by measuring the lowest concentration of a chemical that a person can detect or recognize. A patient may also be asked to compare the tastes of different chemicals or to note how the intensity of a taste grows when a chemical's concentration is increased. Scientists have developed taste testing in which the patient responds to different chemical concentrations. This may involve a simple "sip, spit, and rinse" test, or chemicals may be applied directly to specific areas of the tongue.

Are taste disorders serious?

Yes. A person with a taste disorder is challenged not only by quality-of-life issues, but also deprived of an early warning system that most of us take for granted. Taste helps us detect spoiled food or beverages and, for some, the presence of food to which we're allergic. Perhaps more serious, loss of the sense of taste can also lead to depression and a reduced desire to eat. Abnormalities in chemosensory function may accompany and even signal the existence of several diseases or unhealthy conditions, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, malnutrition, and some degenerative diseases of the nervous system such as Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease.

Can taste disorders be treated?

Yes. If a certain medication is the cause of a taste disorder, stopping or changing the medicine may help eliminate the problem. Some patients, notably those with respiratory infections or allergies, regain their sense of taste when the illness resolves. Often the correction of a general medical problem can also correct the loss of taste. Occasionally, recovery of the chemosenses occurs spontaneously.

Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Kate is here on Mondays and Thursdays. Donna works here 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 great 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*

