

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

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Issue 40, Spring 2011

Welcome to the 40th 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 2011 Newsletter. The Winter has finally thawed and Spring has arrived. Nice and sunny so far, so prepare for rotten hayfever and a hosepipe ban! Can we ever win?

We recently had a routine inspection by the local Primary Care Trust. They were checking all aspects of the practice and we passed the inspection with flying colours.

As promised in our last newsletter, we have a more in-depth article on our cleaning and sterilising procedures. Hopefully this will assure you we are doing all we can to make your visit as safe as possible.

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. Please see below for more details about giving feedback.

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 are asking for your feedback. To help with this we have placed a suggestion box in the waiting room. 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.

Football

As we announced in our previous newsletters, The Rickmansworth Dental Centre is the proud sponsor of the Under 12's Medburn Squad in the Excel Sunday League. The season has now ended with the boys finishing safely in midtable. However in the end of season cup competition, they triumphed, winning the trophy 3-2 in a fantastic final. More silverware to go with the cup they won last season.

Dental Hygienist

We still 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.



National Smile Month

National Smile Month 2011 is running from 15th May to 15th June 2011.

For the 35th year, Smile Month is being organised by the UK's leading independent oral health charity, the British Dental Health Foundation and is dedicated to improving the public's oral health.

The campaign will focus on putting the smile back on peoples' faces and help them display their full personalities with the 'Smile Factor' campaign – the theme for this year's National Smile Month. As in previous years, the British Dental Health Foundation will also be raising the awareness of a healthy diet and the link between good oral health and good overall body health.

The three key messages remain:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste;
- Cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks;
- Visit your dentist regularly.



Focus On Cross Infection Control

One of the items we asked patients about in our recent patient questionnaire was their confidence in our cross infection control. Nearly all felt happy that we kept things as clean as possible in The Dental Centre, but it was also evident that many did not actually know what we did to prevent cross infection.

Cross infection can be defined as the passing of one infection causing microorganism (bacteria, viruses, fungal spores, etc.) from one person to another. This can be directly through contact with an infected person or indirectly through contaminated items. Cross infection control are the measures taken to prevent cross infection. Cross infection in dental practices is extremely rare with only a handful of incidences being recorded. However we take this matter extremely seriously and are constantly updating our policies, procedures and equipment to make sure that your visit to The Dental

Centre remains as safe as possible.

Every patient has their medical history taken and updated. However we practice universal cross infection control measures, which mean that we treat all patients the same, using the highest cross infection control measures.

All staff have their medical status regularly checked and have the recommended vaccinations to reduce the likelihood of infection. All the staff receive regular training in cross infection control. The clinical staff (dentist, nurse or hygienist) always wear a fresh pair of surgical gloves. We also wear masks and protective eyewear when treating patients.

The surgery is zoned into clean areas and contaminated areas to make cleaning easier and we even colour code the cleaning equipment to make sure only cleaning equipment designated for the clinical areas is used within the clinical areas. Between patients the surgery is cleaned using disinfectant sprays and wipes. Our modern treatment centres are designed to be as easy to clean as possible. We try to use as many disposable items as possible (eg. Anaesthetic needles, cups, suction tips, gloves, etc.) and these are all disposed of immediately. We have contracts with specialist companies who dispose of this waste according to the required regulations. Hands are washed between patients, using surgical grade antibacterial cleansers.

Contaminated instruments go to our separate Decontamination Room to be cleaned and sterilised before being reused. Initially instruments are placed in a bath of specialised detergent. This stops debris adhering to the instrument and starts the cleaning process. The instruments then move on to an ultrasonic bath for the next stage of cleaning. The instruments are placed in another specialised cleaning detergent within the tank of the bath. An ultrasonic cleaner functions by containing an electronic 'generator' which develops a high frequency power. The power is supplied to a piezo ceramic transducer which sends sound waves into the tank. These sound waves are of a very high frequency, outside of the audible human range. The sound waves create millions of microscopic bubbles which collapse or implode releasing large amounts of energy and literally suck the contamination from the surface of the item being cleaned. This method of cleaning is far more efficient than the manual cleaning



Our Ultrasonic Bath

and scrubbing that was used in the past. The instruments are then inspected under the magnifying lamp we have in the Decontamination Room, to insure no debris is present. If any is found the instrument goes back into the ultrasonic cleaner.

The instruments are now clean, but not sterile, ie. They are still contaminated with microscopic particles. They then go onto the next stage of the cleaning process in the autoclave. Steam is a very effective way of killing microorganisms. However, normally steam only heats to 100°C, which many organisms can survive. An autoclave is a specialised piece of equipment that heats purified water under pressure, producing steam at temperatures of over 130°C. Instruments placed within the autoclave are subjected to steam at 134 to 137°C for 3 minutes, which destroys all the microorganisms present and sterilises the instruments. We are so concerned about cross infection control at The Dental Centre that we have chosen to install the more expensive vacuum autoclave which, as its name suggests, creates a vacuum in the sterilising chamber, making the sterilising process much more efficient and makes sure all areas of the instrument are sterile. There is no point in having all this expensive equipment if it is not working properly, therefore various tests are carried out daily and at other regular intervals to make sure they are doing the necessary job. All equipment is also tested and serviced at the recommended intervals by qualified engineers. We have also chosen the top of the range models that keep a computer log of every time the machine is used, to make sure that all the correct temperatures, pressures, cycle times, etc. have been reached.



Our Autoclave

Once sterile the instruments are stored in closed trays or sealed pouches. The date of sterilisation is noted and even if an instrument has not been used, we will sterilise it again after a certain period to make sure it is still sterile.

All the water used within the treatment centres is specially treated and regularly tested for any microorganisms, making it far cleaner than tap water. We also underwent and passed testing for the presence of Legionella within the practice water system.

Hopefully all this puts your mind at ease that we are doing all we can to make your visit as safe as possible. If you have any questions about our infection control procedures or wish to see our decontamination procedures in action, please do not hesitate to ask any of the members of staff.

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 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 www.thedentalcentre.org

